CBW
Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly • 26 October 1996 • Issue 241

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HONG KONG 1997

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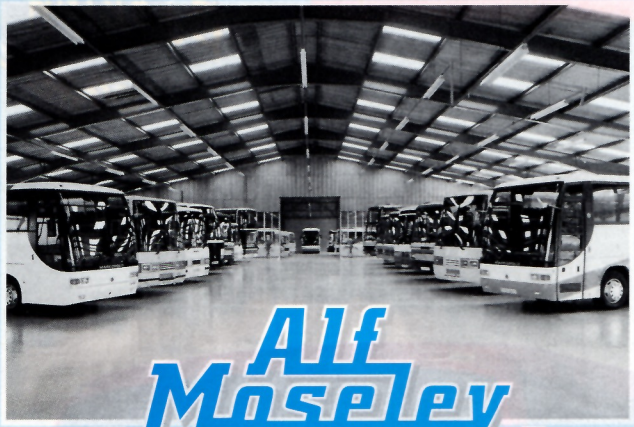

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1994 (May) DENNIS JAVELIN GX 12M PLAXTON PREMIER 3500
53 reclining seats, brown striped moquette, courier seat, rear offside continental door, tinted double glazed side windows, curtains, carpets, power entrance door, finished cream/maroon. **M.O.T. JULY 1997**

1989 (January) MERCEDES BENZ 0303 12M
53 reclining seats (VOGEL), red/orange/yellow moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, tinted side windows with roller blinds, power entrance door with peage window, full SUTRAK air conditioning, carpet to gangway and driver's area, finished red/cream **M.O.T. JULY 1997**

1989 (February) DENNIS JAVELIN 12M DUPLE 320
51 reclining seats, brown/yellow/orange moquette, rear nearside floor mounted toilet, tinted side windows, power entrance door, finished white/orange/red. **M.O.T. MAY 1997**

1985 (April) DAF SB 2300 12M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200
53 reclining seats, grey/red moquette, tinted side windows, curtains, power entrance door, finished all white **M.O.T. MARCH 1997**

1985 (December) LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS) L10 Engine DUPLE LAZOR II 12M
53 reclining seats, brown striped moquette, courier seat, tinted double glazed side windows, power entrance door, finished cream/duo red. **M.O.T. MARCH 1997**

1985 (February) DAF DKFL VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M
50 reclining seats (recent retrim) in Holdsworth brown graffiti moquette, courier seat, rear offside floor mounted toilet, tinted side windows with curtains, power entrance door, finished red/cream **M.O.T. JULY 1997**

1985 (February) VOLVO B10M BERKHOFF EMPEROR
60 reclining seats, red striped moquette, courier seat, toilet, drinks machine, tinted double glazed side windows with blinds, power entrance door, finished cream/maroon. **M.O.T. JUNE 1997**

1984 (April) VOLVO B10M GLE PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M
53 reclining seats, red striped moquette, courier seat, tinted double glazed side windows, curtains, power entrance door, TELMA splitter box , finished cream/maroon. **M.O.T. MARCH 1997**

1983 (November) BOVA FUTURA FHD
49 reclining seats, grey/red striped moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, tinted double glazed side windows, curtains, TV monitor, wired for Video, cool box and water boiler, finished silver/red/blue. **OFFERED WITH NEW M.O.T**

1983 (June) LEYLAND ROYAL TIGER DOYEN 12M
50 reclining seats (recent retrim) in brown/red/orange moquette, courier seat, tinted double glazed windows, power entrance door, semi- automatic gearbox, driver's fan, finished all white. **M.O.T. OCTOBER 1997**

SOLE CONCESSIONAIRES FOR DENNIS JAVELIN MARCOPOLO

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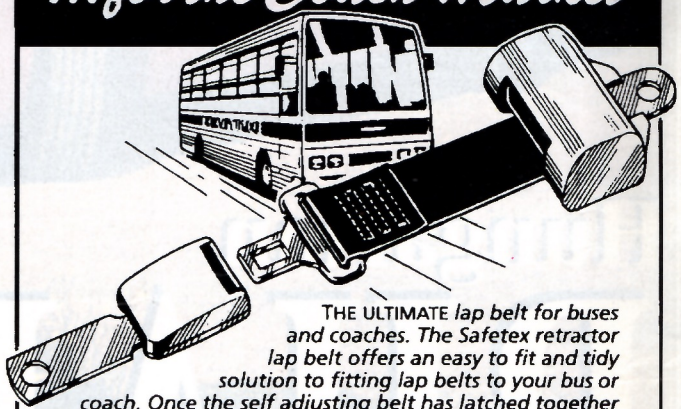

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CBW Coach and Bus Week

Our loyalty is to safety

AS police and the Vehicle Inspectorate step up their targeted spot checks of school buses, the picture emerging is one which has the potential to sully the industry.

For, despite all the balancing comments from operators claiming petty defects and inaccurate press releases, the unavoidable conclusion one has to draw is that things could be better... much better.

The fact that properly-torqued wheelnuts work loose, exhausts corrode, and emergency exit buzzers fail is well known to us all. Yet still these faults are among the most commonly found, and are directly related to passenger safety.

It is understandable that the industry feels the need to close ranks when criticism threatens, but who are we protecting? Yes, we are giving fellow operators the benefit of the doubt, but we are also protecting councils and central government from the obligation to provide the kind of school bus service the industry itself would like to see.

There is no reason whatever for the wider industry to feel sympathy for operators whose tender prices are too low to provide essential maintenance, properly-paid, licensed drivers, and fleet replacement costs. Virtually every operator in the country should feel that school contracts are worth the effort of bidding.

It may not now be enough to merely endorse the principle of enforcement. It is high time the kind of quality partnerships proposed by the Confederation of Passenger Transport were extended to home-to-school transport, county by county.

At the same time, one other vital element must not be overlooked; the provision of sufficient funding by whatever tier of Government to reach a safe, workable standard. Abhorrent though the phrase is, the system we have for providing transport for our children is, indeed, "an accident waiting to happen."

Mike Morgan
Editor

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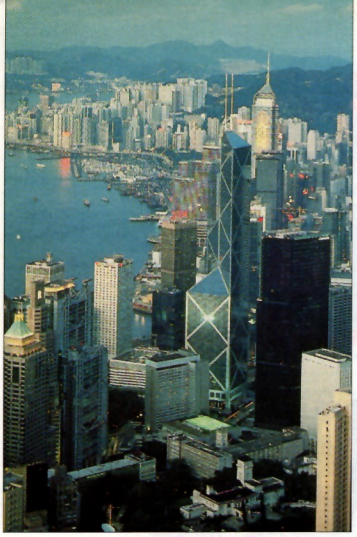


▼ Coach and Bus

Trip of a lifetime

YES, we're off again. And this time our destination is *really* somewhere special: Hong Kong, in the last year of British sovereignty.

CBW has teamed up with Paul Tappin to put together an unforgettable itinerary at a unique point in history. Just months before the ceremonial handover to the Chinese and during the Chinese new year we will be taking in the past, present and future of our most fascinating colony.

We will be riding on a private 1905 tram, drinking in some of the most striking cityscapes in the world and sipping cocktails. We will get behind the scenes at the Aberdeen depot of Hong Kong Citybus and its New Territories operations centre. Then it's all aboard a state-of-the-art coach to travel over the border into mainland China.

All this from the luxurious base of the five-star Excelsior Hotel on Causeway Bay. We will spend four feather-bedded nights there — 17 to 22 February 1997.

Everyone wants to see history being made, so air tickets to Hong Kong in 1997 are extremely difficult to get hold of. This trip of a lifetime is priced at just £1,095 per person sharing a twin room. But we have managed to get hold of only a strictly limited number of places at that rate and can only guarantee to hold it until Monday 28 October 1996.

To make sure of your place in history ring Paul Tappin on 01235 812127 now!

▼ Coach

Why an auto is 'in' gear

AN automatic gearbox can add £8,500 to the price of a new coach. It consumes around one mpg extra fuel. BUT, it cuts maintenance in half, according to North Kent Express operator, the Pullmans Group.

Having lived with automatics and manuals on the same type of work Pullmans' experience makes a compelling argument for the extra investment. And Mike Morgan checks out the claims as he puts one of its new Ikarus-bodied DAF Bus SB3000s to the test — see pages 29-32.

Taking the records for four K-reg Van Hool-bodied DAF SB3000s at random from the workshop, the company reports the following pence-per-mile costs averaged out over 12 months: coach A (manual) - 8.29p; coach B (manual) - 6.67p; coach C (auto) - 3.63p; coach D (auto) - 3.21p. Assuming 60,000 km per annum and average maintenance costs a coach with manual transmission absorbs £4,224 while an automatic costs just £2,112.

▼ Coach and Bus

Company budge by rocketing die

Oil companies blame troubles

by Mark Williams

ROCKETING diesel prices are wrecking the efforts of coach and bus companies to budget for the coming year.

In three months, prices of Derv have risen by more than 10 per cent, outstripping predictions by at least double and leaving operators to pick up the tab.

The official line is that oil companies were expecting more crude oil as trade sanctions were lifted in Iraq, and that recent worries about Saddam Hussein's activities have scuppered that possibility.

But some key industry players believe that oil companies are recouping the cost of a petrol price war at the pumps by passing on the liability to a 'softer' target.

"We started the Go-Ahead financial year in July below budget," said Go-Ahead group engineering director Alan Eatwell. "Fortunately, we had assumed a net increase in fuel, our second biggest expenditure after wages.

Kreppel: 'it's nonsense'

"The price rise has sneaked up on us, adding more than 5p to a litre of diesel. One extra factor may be the specification change, from 0.2 per cent sulphur down to 0.05 per cent, which came in on 1 October, but oil companies will have had to gear up for that some time ago."

▼ Bus

Volvo wins Far East orders

THE Far East companies Kowloon Motor Bus Company and Hong Kong Citybus have placed orders worth £65 million for Volvo Olympians.

The order for 340 buses, with bodying shared between Alexander and Plaxton subsidiary Northern Counties, has staggered delivery through 1997, and production is already under way at Volvo's Irvine plant.

All vehicles will be tri-axles with air conditioning, supplied to KMBC as chassis and a kit-form body from Alexander, and to Citybus as assembled Alexander and Northern Counties vehicles. With seated passengers and standees, they can take 135 people.

The order gives Volvo a 70 per cent share of the double-deck market in Hong Kong. In Singapore, Volvo has 100 per cent of the double-deck market.

▼ Coach and Bus

Kinnock outlines EU's transport plan

'Change not optional'

EUROPEAN Commissioner for Transport Neil Kinnock outlined the EU's plan to co-ordinate public transport when he spoke at the Confederation of Passenger Transport's annual conference this week.

The *Citizens Network Green Paper* met a need for Europe to provide a structure for public transport growth, because increases in car ownership and use are unsustainable, he said.

"Comprehensive and effective policies for securing change in transport patterns and use are, therefore, not optional extras.

"Together with education and training, they are the precondition of sustainable economic success," said Mr Kinnock.

He said the EU's role outlined in its *Fair and Efficient Pricing* paper would be to identify methods by which all passenger transport could pick up the bill for pollution, congestion and accidents to give coaches and buses the advantage... but with decisions to be made at local level.

"However, it is obvious that relatively little use is made of such instruments — even though they would be cost-effective because they would give business and private transport users incentives to establish the most efficient means of shifting freight or moving people," he said.

■ **In next week's issue: an in-depth look at Mr Kinnock's speech**

ts wrecked sel prices

he Middle East

The big problem with bus companies is that they can't recoup the cost quickly: "We can't hike up fares by the week," said Mr Eatwell. "We just have to rob Peter to pay Paul."

Even companies which don't have group fuel arrangements have suffered. Plymouth-based Trathens, now owned by Parks Group, says it is looking to technology to reduce the burden.

"What else can you do," said md Mike Trathen. "We're already trundling along at 62 mph. We have got to get more fuel-efficient engines. But the Government should be putting its money where its mouth is. If it's promoting public transport, it should pay fuel duty rebate, not just for buses but for coaches."

And South Wales Transport's md Alan Kreppel backed Mr Trathen's view that full fuel duty rebate would help encourage operators and restore balance into transport.

"If we take a coachload of passengers to London, we have to pay full cost for the fuel. If they fly, they pay no fuel tax at all," he pointed out.

"This is absolute nonsense in terms of being a transport policy."

A bridge too far...

RAILTRACK staged a bridge crash in Swindon last week to highlight the dangers of using double-deck vehicles under low structures.

The notorious but clearly substantial Whitehouse Road Bridge is Britain's most bashed bridge, taking 11 collisions so far this year and totting up 88 crunches since 1990. It has just 10 feet of headroom. Railtrack hired a stunt driver to career headlong into the bridge in front of an invited press audience but stopped short of letting the bus go more than around 30 mph.

▼ Coach and Bus

Move is backed

CoachandBus Live
8,9,10, April
Donington

***COACH and Bus Live's* move to Donington has been backed by suppliers and operators enthusiastic about the change of venue and change of date (*CBW*, 19 October).**

Donington offers much-improved facilities not only for exhibitors but for visitors and moving the date to 8, 9, 10 April, the second week after Easter, lifts it clear of the British Travel Trade Fair and, hopefully brings milder weather allowing full use of the international Grand Prix circuit for coach, bus and minibus testing.

According to independent research among operators carried out for organisers, EMAP Automotive, 86 per cent said they want to attend the show and actually requested tickets.

Owners of fleets, ranging from 800 right down to one, completed questionnaires.

Eighty three per cent ran fleets of 20 or under. They represented a cross-section of the industry with a mix of new and second-hand coach and bus buyers. Around half the vehicles they operate are second-hand and more than half are valued at less than £50,000.

Around 90 per cent expressed interest in the prospect of purchasing vehicles — new or used — at *Coach and Bus Live* and, with a similar number saying they would sell their own coaches or buses at the event, the potential for deals being completed is very high.

For further details ring Toni King on 01733 467035.

▼ Coach

Premier event selling out fast

NO matter where we go, there never seems to be enough places for the *Coach Industry Awards!*

The massive Purbech Hall in Bournemouth has proven equal to the task this year, but only just. We have only 90 seats available at last count, and they are selling fast.

There are 26 awards, so we've split the presentation into two parts, reaching a crescendo as we announce whose name has been etched on trophies for Best Operator, in small, medium and large fleet sizes. From these three, our panel will also have decided the Overall Coach Operator of the Year — a prestigious title which has boosted business for every recipient so far.

Get your place booked by turning to page 28 and filling in the form.

■ And if you fancy making a day of it around sunny (hopefully!) Bournemouth and Poole, turn to pages 14 and 15 for details of a real busman's holiday — a fam trip around the best-selling resort.

COACH AND BUS WEEK
COACH INDUSTRY AWARDS
1996/7
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE COACH TOURISM COUNCIL

▼ Coach and Bus

Crystals shake-up after review

A MAJOR management shake-up at Crystals Conversions in Doncaster follows a major review of the business in the wake of problems (*CBW*, 21 September).

Md Chris Springham says that, by being open about the firm's difficulties, he can restore supplier and customer confidence.

He told *CBW*: "A lot of people got it wrong over the last 12 months but we are now looking forward to the next 20 years.

"We have new people in place at every level and cash flow is not a problem, with most suppliers being paid as they deliver."

Crystals' Doncaster manufacturing plant produces six minibus conversions a week and Mr Springham says it has a healthy order book covering the next three months production.

In brief

Off the road

BUS operator Transcentral has had its 15-vehicle O-licence suspended by West Midlands traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh until the vehicles pass fresh MoT tests. The company, of Siddons Industrial Estate, Howard Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, was called to public inquiry after a number of its buses were found to be defective by VI inspectors. ■ Full story in Legal News next week

Drugs seizure

HEROIN valued at £8 million was seized by Customs Officers at Dover from a coach taking Polish football fans back from the recent England-Poland match. More than 100 kg of the drug was hidden in two cylinders running along the coach chassis. However, all the fans and two drivers were released without charge.

MMC position

SECRETARY of State for Trade and Industry Ian Lang has appointed Graeme Odgers chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) for a further two years.

Tickets scheme

A NEW scheme from Stagecoach allows Ayrshire pensioners to swap their used bus tickets for TV, gas electricity or phone stamps. The scheme is open to those who have a Strathclyde Concessionary travel permit.

Weighbridge

VEHICLE Inspectorate chief executive Ron Oliver has reopened the Cramond Weighbridge on the A90 southbound at Cramond, north of Edinburgh. The weighbridge will be used to enforce weight legislation and there will be tacho and licensing checks at the site.

Bubbly winner

WINNER of this year's Hansar Finance champagne prize draw at Expocoach was Ben Johnson of Ben Johnson Coaches, Brandesburton, East Yorkshire.

▼ Coach and Bus

Council may have a shortfall in vehicles

Seatbelt regulations eliminate 30 buses

by Mark Williams

RETENDERING of almost 300 Hereford and Worcester school contracts may expose a shortfall in available coaches, the council has said.

The decision to bring forward seatbelt legislation so all school vehicles are fitted before 10 April next year has eliminated 30 buses from current services and now the council is left hoping sufficient coach operators come forward to fill the gap.

"We decided to bring forward the regulation for school transport at the suggestion of coach operators, with whom we have a very good working relationship," said education department transport officer Peter Roberts. "Buses weren't an option to us but only time will tell whether there are enough coaches available.

"This has been a concern not only of this council but others and we accept there may be a shortage of suitable vehicles."

Mr Roberts agreed there might also be a shortage of cash: "We have set aside a significant amount of money but we are aware of quite frightening increases in other areas.

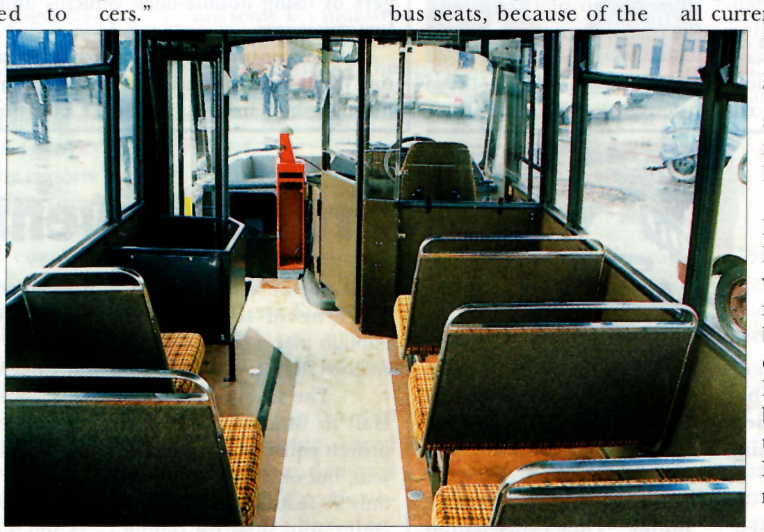
"This is a massive job. We have had to set up a joint team to complete it, involving extra clerical support and two senior officers."

But one operator says the change may have negative safety aspects: "They are asking us to scrap all our nice service buses we have brought in and run Supremes and Dominants in their place," said Martin Perry, of Wacton Coach Sales and Bromyard Coaches.

"How do we know the standard to which the belts should be fitted? Hereford and Worcester rightly points out the danger of fitting lap belts to bus seats, because of the steel grab rails on seat backs, but what about the steel ashtrays on coach seats?"

Mr Roberts acknowledges the problem: "As long as the vehicles meet all current legislation, with reference to the Department of Transport's consultation document, we will be happy.

"We don't know when the DoT is coming out with the seatbelt fitting guidelines but we can't hold on forever," said Mr Roberts. All bids must be with the council by 1 November and results will be announced on 15 November.



Lapbelts on bus seats 'dangerous because of grab rails'

▼ Coach and Bus

Belts policy

BERKSHIRE County Council has agreed to make seatbelts on school buses a policy and end the three-for-two rule.

The council's education committee expects the new rule to increase its costs and will be conducting a budgetary review.

It has also insisted that, in keeping with legislation, drivers of minibuses check that all three-point belts are worn.

▼ Coach and Bus

VI may publish op records

STRATHCLYDE councillors are pressing the Vehicle Inspectorate to shame 'rogue' operators by publishing their inspection records.

The call came after spot checks on 26 school buses resulted in six immediate prohibitions, one for a steering problem so bad the vehicle had to be towed away.

Other faults included a leaking exhaust and faulty main and emergency doors. Among service buses checked was one with six serious faults, which police have recommended for prosecution.

"The public shouldn't be too concerned about the results," warned Vehicle Inspectorate area manager Walter Brown. "These are the product of careful targeting."

But SNP councillor Brian Lawson claimed the problems suggested the situation was "a nightmare waiting to happen.

"The kids are getting the worst deal because operators use the dirtiest, oldest buses to transport them," he said. "They don't want children dirtying up new buses."

Mr Lawson is now pressing Strathclyde PTA to publish a league table of the worst offenders, but SPTA is saying it can't due to confidentiality issues.

However, the VI has confirmed that it is investigating actively publicising prohibition records and previous convictions.

▼ Coach and Bus

Police blitz

A SCHOOL bus check in Bicester, Oxfordshire, resulted in four immediate prohibitions from the 29 vehicles stopped. The Bicester Police Traffic Office operation targeted some of the 14 schools in the area which use home-to-school PSV transport. Of the vehicles stopped, 21 were given full checks by VI officers, and 16 issued with defect notices. Only four coaches had no defects, but no delayed prohibitions were issued.

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Regional Round-up

▼ Kent

Mercury to M&D

MAIDSTONE & District has bought the services and trading name of Mercury Passenger Services on the Isle of Grain.

The company ran six significant routes and two Kent Carrier mobility routes subsidised by the council. The acquisition will keep the name, but provide cross-ticketing on what M & D's management at Invictaway says was an over-bussed corridor.

Former Mercury owner Simon Edgecombe is believed to have left the PSV industry.

▼ London

SLE wins bid

LONDON Transport Buses has selected SLE as preferred bidder for its automatic vehicle location project, to give instant positions for 6,500 buses on 700 routes.

▼ Scotland

Fares slashed

NATIONAL Express has slashed all single fares on its major Scotland-London services.

Edinburgh and Glasgow services are down from a single fare of £20.50 to £13, and Aberdeen from £41 to £24.50. Cuts also cover routes from other major Scottish towns and cities.

▼ County Durham

STE acquisition

COUNTY Durham engineering company ST Equipment has bought two airport service buses in Marseilles... and is sending them back over the channel to the Republic of Georgia in the former USSR.

At the end of this month, they will undertake a journey which, at the admittance of ST Equipment, will be an unknown quantity. After export via Sheerness to Mersin in Turkey, the buses will be driven 1,000 km overland to Tbilisi airport.

▼ West Midlands

TWM staff cuts

TRAVEL West Midlands is reducing its white-collar workforce by 38 personnel.

The National Express subsidiary says its new focus will be on its customers, and recruitment of 170 drivers in the last six months demonstrates how it is determined to become less top-heavy. Though TWM is seeking voluntary redundancies, local newspaper reports suggest that up to 19 staff in middle management may have already been targeted by the cuts.

▼ Gwent

Raglan crash

CASES against driver Philip Crisp and operator Ronald Jones, whose vehicle was involved in the Raglan coach crash last July, were due to be heard at Abergavenny Magistrates as *CBW* went to press.

Ten passengers died and 43 suffered injuries when the coach they were travelling in overturned on a roundabout at Raglan. The operating firm has since ceased trading.

▼ Coach and Bus

Brewers buys Po

...and existing staff are guar

by Mark Williams

FIRSTBUS subsidiary Brewers Motor Services of South Wales has bought all the bus services run by Porthcawl Omnibus.

The deal leaves Porthcawl Omnibus running its existing contracts and coach services, as its owner, John Williams, goes into semi-retirement. His bus manager Godfrey Morgan joins Brewers, and all bus-driving staff have been guaranteed a job.

"Our family is delighted that, having served the area for almost 30 years, we have been able to complete this sale to Brewers — a company with a record of a major investor in new vehicles and substantial growth in the area," said Mr Williams.

The acquisition

Wallace Arnold's Ailsa: a refurbished bus used to promote coach travel

▼ Coach

WA finds a 'new niche market'

NEWEST addition to the Leeds-based Wallace Arnold Tours Fleet is a double-deck Volvo Ailsa, converted to luxury specification and which used to operate in the Volvo Penta fleet.

Purchased as a company promotional vehicle, the Ailsa is attracting private-hire bookings from conference and hospitality organisers because of the prominence of the company's phone number on the rear of the bus.

Formerly in the fleet of Premier (Harold Wilson) of Stainforth, and acquired by Sheffield-based Mainline, the bus was comprehensively converted by United Counties Engineering to a hospitality vehicle with two lounges, bar and servery on the top deck and high-quality lounge downstairs. There is a retractable canopy on the nearside of the bus, which was last used at the Brighton Coach Rally in April.

WA operations director Stephen Barber said the bus was primarily purchased for WA's own promotional work but the prominence of the telephone number on the rear had attracted a number of private hire inquiries. "I think we have discovered a new niche market for the future," he said.

rthcawl Bus

anteed jobs

grows Brewers by 10 vehicles and spurs it into undergoing a major refurbishment.

"This will no doubt create new employment opportunities in the future," said Brewers' md Bev Fowles. "We see Porthcawl as an important part of our plans and intend to enhance the availability of services in that area, especially to Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea."

The remainder of Porthcawl's business will be operated by Mr Williams' family.

Aintree Coachline's driver admitted partying the previous night

▼ Coach and Bus

We need you

VOLUNTEERS are wanted for a new series of *CBW's* much-missed and highly-valued Maintenance Diary.

The next Maintenance Diary starts on 1 November 1996. It will give the only comparative analysis of coach and bus running costs available to the industry. But we need your help.

It's now more than two years since the last series came to an end and the time is now right to resurrect the monthly log of maintenance experiences on six different coaches and buses.

Consequently we are looking for half-a-dozen vehicle owners who keep detailed records of their running costs - diesel, oil, types of cost, etc.

All we need is completion of a simple form at the end of each month, starting with November and ending next April. In addition to costs we want details of all mechanical repairs conducted and mileage covered ... and, hopefully, some helpful engineering hints and tips on how to keep that particular type of coach or bus running sweetly.

It's a mix of vehicle types and ages that is required, so there are no exclusions. Why not volunteer?

Give Mike Morgan a ring on 01733 467139 if you are keen to participate or need further details.

▼ Coach and Bus

Drink driver is banned

A COACH driver for Aintree Coachline was banned from driving for three years after admitting a drinking session the previous evening put him over the limit.

Preston Magistrates heard that his blood alcohol level was almost twice over the limit when he was stopped by police suspicious of his driving at 45 mph down the fast lane of the M6.

He was carrying around 80 children at the time. He said he had been drinking until about 1 am the previous evening at a charity function, and had been badly shaken by the incident. On top of the ban, he was fined £750 and has lost his job.

▼ Coach and Bus

LT announces fare changes

LONDON Transport has decided to freeze most fares and simplify fare structure by removing off-peak differentials.

The package will provide LT with four per cent extra revenue — £44 million in round terms, which LT says is the lowest fare revision for 12 years, and will be ploughed into network improvements.

"We are keen to attract new target groups of travellers," said LT marketing director Norman Cohen. "We are currently running a trial of a new student discount ticket at Queen Mary College in East London. If successful, we hope to launch a ticket for full-time students across London next year."

Among fare changes are flat-rate, two-price Night Bus fares, a single child's fare of 40p all day and a 10p price rise on zone two, short-hop fares to 60p. One-day scratch cards have been abolished due to fare collection mistakes and fraud.

▼ Coach and Bus

UVG Mobility is born

HAMPSHIRE bodybuilder UVG has chosen next month's Community Transport Association show to unveil the new name for the former Bedwas Bodyworks company, bought by UVG this Summer.

UVG Mobility, as the marketing operation has been christened, will concentrate its efforts on wheelchair accessible vehicles up to Dart size, says UVG, cross-sourcing with the parent factory in Waterlooville when required.

The new name for the former Bedwas factory will be UVG (Wales) Ltd.

UVG will exhibit an Iveco Daily 49.10, Mercedes-Benz 611D, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 412D, Iveco Daily Access, and a Dennis Javelin-based accessible coach at the Blackpool CTA show. CBW

▼ Coach

Kings Ferry: £1.6 million K113s order

Four Irizars, five Van Hools

First Century's panel repairs proved after-sales service was prompt

by Mark Williams

COMMUTER coach company The Kings Ferry has put its money on Scania's K113 chassis, ordering nine, top-specified vehicles. The £1.6 million order, due for delivery by January, includes two further Irizar Century tri-axles and two standard Centurys, all fitted with toilet, video, seatback tables and Comfort Shift semi-auto gear changes. The remaining five are Van Hool Alizees, without toilet but offering 53 seats. Like all The Kings Ferry vehicles, they have air conditioning.

"This is the third year we've had Irizars, and we think they are cracking vehicles," said md Peter O'Neill. "As for Scania chassis, we have 24 in the fleet. The last delivered were quieter than most coaches and have returned very good mileages. We usually expect around 8 mpg on commuter services but we've been getting 10 to 11 mpg from the tri-axles despite the massive 360 bhp engine."

Mr O'Neill said worries about spares delivery for the Irizar bodywork were allayed after a truck swept most of the panelling off one side of his original, 1994 Century. Panels and locker doors ordered that afternoon were delivered next morning and fitted perfectly first time. The vehicle was working again within two days, and parts prices were "surprisingly low."

"We've never had more than one Van Hool at one time but we've put that right. The good residuals made them worth ordering," said Mr O'Neill. "Above all, I'm happy to do business with Scania Bus & Coach. They listen to me."

▼ Guided Bus

Edinburgh boost

THE Scottish Office is to pump £15 million into the Edinburgh Transport Strategy, which includes a £30 million rapid transit busway linking the city to the airport.

The funding, to be made available over the next three years, is a share of the £28.5 million prize money from Scotland's first ever Transport Challenge Funding competition.

The busway scheme proposed by City of Edinburgh Council is under discussion with the Scottish Office, and would amount to eight miles of dedicated track starting service by 2001. Private funding will also be sought.

Western Edinburgh transport plans, which include two park-and-ride sites, will cost £50 million, and CEC says it may sell its stake in a shopping centre to raise funding.

▼ Bus

EYMS marks anniversaries

HULL-based East Yorkshire Motor Services is marking a series of anniversaries, including its 70th birthday, with a special service on the Hull to Easington corridor, where the 1920s fare of three shillings will be charged.

EYMS was formed on 5 October 1926 and Connor & Graham, purchased by EYMS in 1994, ran its first bus to Hull on 21 October 1921. Saturday 26 October marks the 10th anniversary of deregulation of local bus services, EYMS' preserved 'Beverley Bar' double decker is 40 years old on 1 November, and the former proprietor of Connor & Graham Tom Graham is 80 years old.

In addition to the standard service timetable between Easington and Hull, EYMS will operate additional special journeys with the Beverley Bar decker and a 1973 coach still in Connor & Graham colours, on which the 15p fare will be charged. The services will depart Easington at 8.53am, Withernsea at 9.32am and 1.32pm and return from Hull at 11.15am and 3.15pm.

East Yorkshire chairman Peter Shipp said Tom Graham still retained a lively interest in the business, and might even be persuaded to act as conductor, to bring back memories of his time on the buses.

Volvos with Alexander bodywork among order for Stagecoach Busways

▼ Bus

Busways buying 21 more vehicles

STAGECOACH Busways will increase the total of new buses introduced since joining the group to 140, with the purchase of a further 21 new buses.

All bodied by Alexanders of Falkirk, the vehicles will comprise 13 Volvo B10M single deckers for Newcastle and eight Dennis Darts for Sunderland and South Shields.

All buses will be equipped to the latest DPTAC and emission standards and bring the total fleet investment to over £10 million in two years.

CBW

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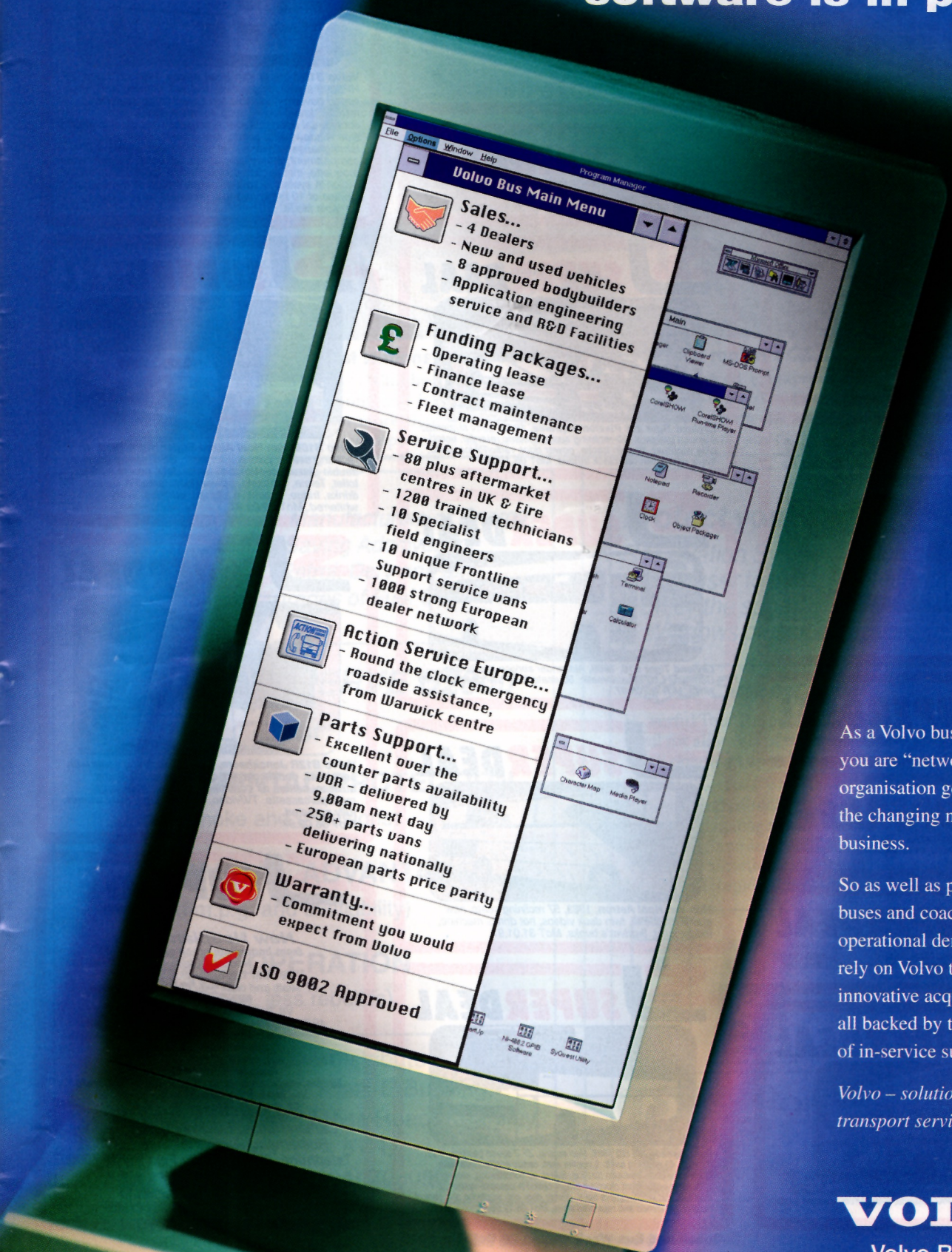
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SECOND TO NONE

SJ SUPERDEAL

DAF 11.60 EOS, 1992, *6 speed manual gearbox, 53 reclining seats courier seat, seat back nets, centre sunken toilet, fridge, Webasto, air conditioning, double glazing, driver's bunk, fully carpeted. MoT 22.08.97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

DAF (11.6) LAG PANARAMIC 1988, *6 speed ZF gearbox, 49 reclining seats, double glazed, centre continental door, Driver's bunk, Telma, Webasto, power door, toilet, radio/PA/cassette, TV/video, drinks, fridge, livery white/orange & brown. MoT May '97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

DAF Van Hool LD SB2300, 1990, *ZF 6 speed splitter gearbox, 49 reclining seats, centre continental door, toilet, servery unit, double glazed, curtains, TV/video, radio/ PA/cassette, interior brown/orange, repainted white. NewMoT*

SJ SUPERDEAL

1993 DAF MB230 Auto Van Hool Alizee body, *57 rec seats, curtain, rear continental door.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

1993 DAF SB3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee body, *51 rec seats, toilet washroom, hot water boiler, curtains, centre continental door, choice of 2, 1 with TV/video.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Dennis 290 GX Plaxton Premiere, 1993, *49 reclining seats,courier seat, ZF 6 speed gearbox, toilet, fridge, servery, air conditioning, double glazing, fold down tables, lap type seat belts, curtains, seat back nets, aircraft lockers, 3 x TV monitors. MoT 11.04.97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Toyota Caetano Optimo II, 1990, *18 seats plus courier, manual gearbox, power door, radio/PA/ cassette, livery white, maroon seats, red curtains. New MoT.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger 245 Plaxton Supreme V, 1982, *ZF 6 speed gearbox, 53 fixed seats, power door, radio/PA system, livery gold/red/black stripes. MoT 09.02.97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

LEYLAND TIGER 245 BERKHOF EVEREST, *1985 semi automatic 5 speed gearbox, 49 seats, rear continental door, auxiliary heater, power door, toilet, radio/pa/cassette, blue curtains,livery white. MoT 20-7-97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger 218 Plaxton Supreme, 1982, *Semi automatic 6 speed gearbox, 50 reclining seats, electric retarder, tinted side windows, curtain tracks, power door, radio/PA/cassette, livery white with red/black stripes. MoT 06.12.96*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger L10, 1989, *Alexander service bus bodies, Cummins L10 ZF automatic, 55 seats & 24 standees, painted white. MoT 30.08.97.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Man Van Hool Astron, 1983, *57 reclining seats, new graffiti moquette, twin deck videos, hot drinks machine, fridge, toilet, 3 driver's bunks. MoT 31.01.97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Setra Tornado 215 HD 1992, *Man engine, ZF 7 speed gearbox, Voith retarder, 49 reclining seats & courier seat, centre sunken toilet with continental door, Webasto heating, Sutrak air conditioning, servery unit with water boiler, front mounted fridge, radio/PA cassette system, 2 TV monitors and video, drivers bunk, drivers door with wardrobe and central locking, retrimmed and repainted white. MoT 06.12.96.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B10M Mk III Van Hool Alizee, 1991, *273 bhp, ZF HP5000 automatic gearbox, internal retarder, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, autolube, ferry lift, kneel facility, plug entrance door, centre continental door, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, rear screen curtains, Ishringhausen driver's seat, courier seat, crew compartment, 49 reclining seats, lap belts, brown/orange moquette, mid section servery/fridge, toilet, Radiomobile radio/PA system, 2 roof air vents, forced air ventilation. Choice of 10 brown/orange, repainted white 2 pack. Variable MoTs.*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B10M Van Hool Alizee Super High, 1989, *45 reclining seats, plus courier seat, GS 7 speed gearbox, double glazed, centre continental door, centre sunken toilet, Telma, Webasto, power door, radio/PA system, TV, drinks, fridge, executive kitchen, curtains, livery white/red. MoT 06.03.97*

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B12R Jonckheere, 1994 *71 reclining seats with seat belts, double glazed, continental door, Telma, auxiliary heater, air conditioning, power door, toilet, radio/pa/cassette, TV/video, drinks, fridge, alloy wheels, fully carpeted. MoT 06.08.97*

SJ UPDATE

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▼ Coach and Bus

Police under fire again for PG9s

by Mark Williams

ESSEX Police are again under fire from coach and bus operators...this time for press reports that 22 out of six school buses checked got immediate prohibitions.

The stories originated from a press release from the police (*CBW*, 19 October), which it now admits may be flawed. The 22 PG9s issued were a mixture of delayed and immediate prohibitions, and the local region of the Confederation of Passenger Transport says it can trace only TWO immediate prohibitions.

The press release and comment by organising officer Pc Harry Sexton also suggests that all 40 vehicles subject to either PG9s or defect notices compromised safety, but Eastern National picked up a defect notice for having chewing gum stuck on a bus seat.

Defect notice issued for gum on seat

Test stations later cleared PG9s, says Essex region's CPT

"Children's safety is paramount, and it is very disturbing that more than half the school buses inspected so far have been found to be defective," says the offending statement. Local media picked up on the statement and the result, says the local CPT, has damaged operators' image.

CPT regional secretary John Wilson also alleges some of the delayed prohibitions issued were cleared the following day at test stations without further work being done to the vehicles.

"We fully support safety checks," said Mr Wilson. "But when they mess up the business of innocent operators we are understandably annoyed.

"We had one radio programme alleging operators were cutting corners by getting the last 500 miles out of every tyre. That is suggesting that tyres are unsafe because they are near the tread limit."

The school bus checks — part of an ongoing programme — are understood to be the result of a council initiative, organised by the police and overseen by Vehicle Inspectorate officers.

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▼ Europe

Nat-Ex Paris link

NATIONAL Express has joined forces with Eurostar to launch a direct coach/rail link to Paris, costing £79 per person return travelling from anywhere in England and Wales. Travellers from Scotland will pay an extra £10.

The fares apply to departures on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. People travelling on Friday, Saturday and Sunday will pay £99 (£109 from Scotland). The offer is valid between 4 November and 31 March 1997.

Prices include coach travel from anywhere on the National Express coach network to Victoria Coach Station, in London, from where a shuttle will be provided to the Eurostar terminal at Waterloo. There will be a choice of five daily departures to Paris and six back to London.

National Express also is offering an overnight stop in Paris from £99. The package includes return travel and one night's bed and Continental breakfast in a choice of three two-star hotels.

Alternatively, travellers can stay in one of six Timhotels in central Paris, from £110 per person. Travellers from Scotland will pay a £10 supplement.

Bob Wiper, chief executive of National Express, said: "We ran trials earlier in the year with outstanding success and we are delighted to be a in a position to make it available nationally. We are sure it will be very popular with the public and a real money-spinner for our agents."

▼ UK

Awards fam tour

THE 1996 Coach Industry Awards will be a night to remember, so why not make it a day to remember too, by joining a familiarisation tour? Bournemouth Tourism has organised a coach tour that will depart from the Stakis Hotel at 11am on Saturday, 23 November. There will be a short orientation tour of the resort before heading for Poole. The itinerary will include a visit to Poole Quayside, a pub lunch hosted by Poole Tourism and a tour of Poole Pottery. The coach will be back in Bournemouth by 3.45pm, giving people plenty of time to get ready fore the big night. Places may be reserved by contacting Paul Buck, at Bournemouth Tourism, on 01202 451702.

▼ Worldwide

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CRUISES in Alaska and safaris in Botswana are featured in the 1997 Long Haul Tours & Cruising brochure from **Albatross Tours**.

The safari is part of the 16-day Delights of Southern Africa tour that takes Cape Town and The Wilderness, via the Garden Route, in South Africa; Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe; and the Chobe National Park, in Botswana. Net prices are £2,399 per person based on sharing a twin room.

Departure dates are on 25 and 27 September.

The cruise is part of a 12-day tour of Alaska and Western Canada, departing on 17 August. Net prices are from £1,695. Tours to Ontario, Niagara and New York State, and US National Parks and Mountains are also available.

A 24-day Very Best of Australia is available from £3,285 per person net and departs on 27 October.

All the Albatross air tours feature shared departures, allowing coach operators to allocations as small as two seats.

More information from Albatross Tours on 01622 790700.

Cruises and safar

■ A programme of 85 tours ranging from a weekend in the Cotswolds to seven days in Andalucia is featured in 1997 British and European Holidays brochure from **Epsom Tours**.

Director Christopher Richmond said: "Scenery and heritage are still our best sellers but theme tours are mushrooming. These include stately homes and gardens, steam trains, the Royal Family and the TV series, *Heartbeat*."

Epsom Tours specialises in the UK and destinations include a four-day Easter in Derbyshire break for £175; an eight-day tour of the Scottish Highlands for £449; the six-day North Wales Contrasts for £279; and a five-day air-tour to the

CTC chairman Chris Wales addresses one of the receptions

▼ UK

CTC recruitment success

THE Coach Tourism Council enjoyed a successful recruitment drive at Expocoach, with another seven UK companies signing up. These included Independent Coachways, from Leeds, and Claytons Holiday Tours, from Leicester. Three Dutch companies also decided to join the council, which recently announced a range of new benefits for members.

The council also hosted two receptions for potential members on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of the show, at the Novotel at Birmingham Airport. Chris Wales, CTC chairman, who gave a welcome speech at both, said: "We are delighted to welcome new members and pride ourselves on being about to offer those who join a number of benefits. These include free publicity, some great discounts on insurance and hotels, as as well as a number of other exclusive special offers."

Operators wanting more information about joining the CTC should contact the secretary, Derrick Alsop, on 0115 943 2260.

offer for next year

s, plus extra programme to Ireland

by William Golden

Isle of Man for £365.

Continental destinations are Belgium, France, Germany, Holland and Spain. An eight-day tour to the French Riviera costs £455, while eight days in Bavaria is available for £525.

Accommodation is on a half-board basis in three-star hotels and there are numerous pick-up points in Surrey and south London.

■ A dedicated Disneyland Paris brochure has been produced by **Harris Holidays**, featuring the options of a day trip flyer, or two and three-day breaks. The packages include free local departures, travel by luxury coach and return crossing via Le Shuttle or ferry. An entrance pass into the French theme park is included, apart from on day trips but it may be pre-booked. Overnight packages include on-site accommodation or at a hotel within a few miles of the resort.

As an example of prices, two days at Disneyland Paris departing on 6 December costs £89 per person. This is based on two adults sharing a room at the Santa Fe.

Harris Holidays, of West Thurrock, Grays, Essex, is a bonded tour operator and has been organising holidays to France - especially Paris - for the past 20 years.

■ More than 56 touring itineraries in 19 countries are featured in the 1997 Travel Guide from **Independent Coach Travel**.

New for next year are ten-day tours to The North Cape and the Baltic States with prices from £559 per person. These will be run alongside firm favourites such as the Austrian lakes and mountains, chocolate and lace weekends in Bruges and Rhine tours.

France is prominently featured and two nights in Paris are available from £32 a head. Prices include bed and breakfast accommodation and return sea crossing. An 11-day tour covering Hidden Spain and the Wines of Western France costs £345 per person.

Lead-in prices for UK tours are £49 for two nights in London, and five-day itineraries through Scotland, The Lake District and York from £99 for four nights half-board accommodation. All prices are based on a minimum of 30 passengers and include a free place for the driver. Stephen Moore, ICT's sales and marketing director, said: "With over 130 hotels in 19 countries and 56 suggested itineraries, the guide is by far our biggest and most exciting collection to date."

ICT also features 11 touring suggestions in its new 1997 Just Ireland brochure. Prices range from £79 for three nights half-board in County Clare to £189 for a five-night tour based in Killarney. Travel is via the Stena Line HSS and prices are based on a minimum of 30 passengers. There are free places for drivers.

More details about all 1997 tours from Mr Moore on 0171 538 4627.

▼ UK

Clamour for BTTF

MORE and more exhibitors are queuing up to take stands at next year's British Travel Trade Fair, the second time the travel trade showcase has been under Reed Exhibition management.

By the beginning of this month, two-thirds of last year's 510 exhibitors had confirmed their participation and the number of new exhibitors lining up was well ahead of the same time last year.

Fiona Jeffery, exhibition director, said: "Working closely with the British Tourist Authority, we attracted an increased number of overseas visitors this year. For 1997, we are expanding that activity and targeting coach and tour operators all over the Continent."

British Travel Trade Fair is organised by Reed Exhibition Companies on behalf of the English, Northern Ireland Scottish and Wales Tourist Boards and the British Tourist Authority. It will be held at the Birmingham NEC on Wednesday and Thursday, 19 and 20 March.

The show will have a new layout, with regional tourist boards being grouped together alphabetically.

CBW

Eurowatch

WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Amsterdam	13C/55F	Madrid	15C/59F
Athens	22C/72F	Oslo	9F/48F
Berlin	12C/54F	Paris	11C/52F
Brussels	13C/55F	Rome	16C/61F
Dublin	12C/54F	Stockholm	12C/54F
Lisbon	20C/68F	Vienna	15C/59F
Luxembourg	11C/52F	Zurich	8/46F

DIESEL PRICES

(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.58	Luxembourg	0.44
Belgium	0.57	Netherlands	0.56
Eire	0.58	Norway	0.73
France	0.53	Portugal	0.48
Germany	0.52	Spain	0.50
Greece	0.43	Sweden	0.67
Italy	0.62	Switzerland	0.65

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	16.63 Sch/£	Italy	2,389 Lire/£
Belgium	48.65 BFr/£	Netherlands	2.66 Gld/£
Denmark	9.10 K/£	Norway	10.08 NKr/£
Eire	0.96 Punt/£	Portugal	239 Es/£
France	7.98 F/£	Spain	199 Pta/£
Germany	2.37 DM/£	Sweden	10.35 SKr/£
Greece	373 D/£	Switzerland	1.94 SFr/£

▼ Maintenance

Community bus project warn

Inquiry hears minibus taken to Poland despite conditi

by Michael Jewell

SPILSBY Community Bus Project has been warned about the condition of its vehicles by Eastern traffic commissioner Brigadier Compton Boyd at a Cambridge disciplinary inquiry.

The Project, of Post Office, Great Steeping, Spilsby, Lincolnshire, had been called before the commissioner after the issue of a prohibition notice to a minibus which was endorsed as showing a significant maintenance failure.

The hearing was adjourned on the first occasion after none of the Project's officials appeared and the commissioner imposed a condition placed on its Community Bus Permit preventing it from operating its minibus until the vehicle had passed a Class 5 MoT test (*CBW*, 21 September).

Brigadier Boyd said that, though the Project co-ordinator Terence Wiltshire had to attend an inquest in Poland on the last occasion, he was not entirely satisfied nobody could appear. He had imposed the condition because of his concern for road safety. He understood that Mr Wiltshire had taken the vehicle to Poland, being unaware of the condition.

DoT vehicle examiner John Wright said the Project operated one 16-seat minibus. A colleague carried out a maintenance investigation in August 1993 and the vehicle was found to be satisfactory. However, it was found that the nominated maintenance contractor was not being used, it being said the maintenance was being carried out by a different commercial garage.

There were no inspection records available from either garage. The Traffic Area Clerk wrote to the Project in January 1994, expressing concern about the failure to notify the change of contractor and reminding Mr Wiltshire of the need to keep inspection records for 15 months.

He had carried out a maintenance investigation in May, said Mr Wright. He inspected the minibus and issued it with an immediate prohibition for three defects. A seat was insecure with a bolt missing from the mounting and there were fractured seat back rests on two other seats.

He also issued a defect notice for a number of lighting defects and a windscreen wiper blade that was too large for the windscreen. Inspections were stated to be carried out at intervals of 2,000 miles or four weeks.

However, the inspection records over the previous 15 months revealed that intervals ranged from nine to 13 weeks, with gaps of as much as 3,600 miles. All the inspection records were signed by Mr Wiltshire, who said the commercial garage had gone out of business some time previously.

Mr Wiltshire had said that, because of the low mileage, he was proposing increasing the inspection period to eight weeks or 2,000 miles. The facilities were far from ideal, said Mr Wright, with inspections being carried out on a rough concrete patch next to the Post Office.

He had visited Mr Wiltshire the previous day, said Mr Wright. Mr Wiltshire said the vehicle had broken down in Poland and had to be left behind. The maintenance records were in the vehicle.

He saw another 16-seater minibus which was being sprayed. Mr Wiltshire had said he would be carrying out the mainte-

Community Bus Permits can be subject

▼ Finance

'Banned' director given three-month

A WIGAN operator has been given three months to produce audited accounts by North Western deputy traffic commissioner John Levin.

Graham Ing, trading as Sureway Travel, of Cricket Street, Wigan, Lancashire, had been called before the deputy commissioner at a Manchester disciplinary inquiry. He held four-vehicle national licence.

For Mr Ing, James Backhouse said he had been unable to produce the financial information required in the time available.

Mr Levin pointed out the letter sent to Mr Ing in August clearly set out what was required.

Mr Backhouse said there were no details of the overdraft facility available as Mr Ing was still in negotiation with the bank. Audited accounts up to last November could have been provided, but they would be meaningless as the business had changed its shape. A lot of the business operated on a properly-recorded cash basis. Hopefully, Mr Ing would be able to provide a proper set of accounts within six weeks. It was a relatively new business and it did not have a history of accounts that could be produced.

Mr Levin said he had a report saying Mr Ing had been banned from acting as a director of any firm

Mr Levin said he had a report published in a local newspaper relating to a company called Showprofit Ltd, saying Mr Ing had been banned from acting as a director of any company. When Mr Ing applied to change his licence from a restricted to a standard national one in July 1995, he had answered 'no' to the question asking whether he had ever been connected with a company that had gone into liquidation.

Maintaining he had answered that question correctly, Mr Ing said the question concerned referred to the previous two years.

Mr Levin pointed out Showprofit had gone into liquidation in August 1993. He said that, in fact, Mr Ing had declared the matter in his previous application for a restricted licence.

Mr Backhouse said Mr Ing was appealing against the disqualification order as he was never a director of that company, and Mr Ing said his contention was he had never had any connection with it.

DoT vehicle examiner Peter Holce said he had carried out a maintenance investigation in May following local intelligence and because of the condition of Mr Ing's vehicles had been found to be in during spot checks.

He inspected two vehicles and imposed a delayed prohibition for two items and a defect notice for 12 items on a vehicle Mr Ing had for a month. The vehicle was displaying a vehicle excise licence disc that had expired at the end of April.

When he looked through the inspection records it was apparent the vehicle had been put into use after its acquisition without first being inspected. There was no forward-planning system and no driver defect reporting sys-

ed about vehicles

on imposed preventing its operation

nance using the facilities of a local commercial garage, Atkins Bodycare.

Mr Wright said he had received a message the previous day from the traffic police at Skegness. They said they had stopped the vehicle said to be in Poland on 4 September in Skegness and an investigation was being carried out into the use of that vehicle at that time.

In reply to Mr Wiltshire, Mr Wright agreed that sometimes one examiner's opinion could differ from another's.

of condition imposed by commissioner

Mr Wiltshire said the seats had not been fractured, though there had been far too much play in them. The prohibition was lifted after another vehicle examiner had passed them without any repair having been carried out.

In reply to the commissioner, Mr Wiltshire said the inspection periods had become extended because the vehicle had done little mileage. It had been his fault. He agreed he had neglected to inform the Traffic Area Office about the change in the maintenance arrangements.

Asked why the Project's secretary or treasurer could not have attended on the last occasion, Mr Wiltshire said he had taken one to Poland with him and the other would not attend on his own.

He had flown out to Poland and his wife had followed a week later in the minibus. He suspected it was seen in Skegness before his wife took it over to Poland. She'd had no idea it needed to be retested before being used.

She would not have opened the decision letter as it was addressed to him. He had thought the test when the prohibition was lifted was the test referred to but he now realised that was not the case.

If he got the vehicle back from Poland, it would be re-tested. He thought his wife had probably taken the kids to school when the vehicle was seen in Skegness. They had got another bus now which was easier to maintain.

He accepted the situation had been far from ideal in the past. He'd had a long discussion with the vehicle examiner the previous day. He intended to take a CPC course. The vehicle would be inspected at the stated intervals of time or mileage, whichever came first.

Brigadier Boyd said he wanted evidence providing that the vehicle had gone across to Poland within 10 days. Mr Wiltshire said that was not a problem.

Mr Wright said the new bus the Project had bought was an ex-Lincolnshire Road Car vehicle and was a proper minibus, which was much more robust and easier to maintain.

Issuing a warning, Brigadier Boyd said he only had two options — to issue a warning or revoke the permit. He warned that, if there were further problems, he would revoke the permit and that would hit the people the project was providing a service for.

▼ Maintenance

M&C authorisation cut

MAINTENANCE problems have led to M&C Coaches O-licence authorisation being cut from nine vehicles to eight at a Glasgow disciplinary inquiry.

Mary and Charles McClure, who trade as M&C Coaches, of 7 Wallace Avenue, Elderslie, Johnstone, Renfrewshire, had been called before Scottish traffic commissioner Michael Betts.

In cutting the authorisation, the commissioner said he would be prepared to consider an application to increase the authorisation back to nine vehicles in six months if a suitable maintenance system had been put in place.

deadline to produce audited accounts

tem despite a previous warning letter.

He had visited Mr Ing early in 1995 after information he was no longer using his stated maintenance contractor and that there was an outstanding debt of £1,335. Mr Ing told him the debt was due to a disagreement in that he considered the work carried out was under warranty. Mr Ing had twice changed maintenance contractors since.

In reply to Mr Backhouse, Mr Holce agreed the defects on the vehicle given the prohibition were not indicative of a vehicle that had been neglected. He had no complaint about the condition of the other vehicle examined.

Mr Ing said the vehicles were inspected on a six-weekly cycle planned ahead in a diary. Following the warning letter, he had instituted a driver defect reporting system which was still in use.

It was fair to say he was better at keeping to it than some of his drivers. His intention was now to introduce a nil daily driver defect reporting system. He produced a letter from his current maintenance contractors, Racecourse Motors, of Newton le Willows, indicating there was no problem over finance in relation to the maintenance of the vehicles.

Currently his creditors stood at £1,200 and debtors were around £4,700. He had three vehicles. He was moving towards the acquisition of newer vehicles as they were easier to maintain.

He had changed his original maintenance contractor because of the distance involved when work he'd had in Blackpool ceased. He had changed twice since because of dissatisfaction over the service he received.

Currently his creditors stood at £1,200 and debtors were around £4,700

Some £215 owed to his last maintenance contractor did not relate to maintenance.

A county court judgment was not related to the business, but was in connection with water rates and it had now been discharged. He had spent approximately £6,500 on repairs this year all but £200 of which had been paid. The prohibited vehicle was hired from Red Line Travel and he could not tax it himself but had to ask them to do it. The tax for the month concerned had been paid.

Mr Backhouse said there was no evidence of vehicles being operated in a dangerous condition.

Mr Levin said he needed to see the accounts when they were drawn up and the result of the appeal in regard to Mr Ing's disqualification as a director. He was satisfied with the explanation about the frequent change of maintenance contractors.

He could not at this stage be satisfied about the financial position and he was unhappy about the way Mr Ing's personal and business affairs were mixed in the one bank account. He required the vehicle examiner to carry out a further check in about six months.

CBW

The real cost of seatbelts

WHAT is the cost of using vehicles with seatbelts on school contracts? Not only is there the original fitment costs, but the ongoing maintenance of them, too. In some parts of the country I hear it suggested that one belt per vehicle per week has to be replaced.

Considerable though these new costs are (and they do, indeed, need to be recovered — the already microscopically slender profits made operating school contracts cannot absorb them), they are small compared with the effect of increasing the value of vehicles deployed on this work.

There can hardly be an operator of school contracts in the land who has not decided that one, or some, of his vehicles are simply not worth the cost and trouble of seatbelt fitment. In one county alone, where more than 200 school contracts are currently being re-tendered, 70 per cent of the coaches at present doing these contracts are pre-1988 models.

If, of that 140 vehicles, half are eliminated from this market due to the dis-economy of fitting seatbelts, I suggest that this has two, very inter-related, effects.

Firstly, it will lessen the degree of competition for school contracts. Seventy vehicles down over 200 contracts must make a sizeable difference.

Secondly (when the effect is compounded across the country) it is going to create a gigantic market shortage of post-1988 coaches and a consequent increase in price for the limited numbers of such vehicles available for sale.

Below I have set out a table which supports my contention that there is very little scope to make profits by running school contracts for less than £100 a day. As always, my figures are simply illustrative, and I urge operators to do their own costing exercises.

I have attempted to show what the outgoings might be for an average operator of between five and 10 vehicles, and the effect of the value of the vehicle on contract rates. I have made allowance for a lower spares cost per mile for newer (ie more costly) coaches. Conversely, the cost of insurance, finance (or interest return on invested capital), and depreciation rises if newer vehicles replace older ones.

It is always difficult to decide what proportion of standing costs should be covered by peak-hour working, on peak use days of the year. The amount of off-peak and weekend work on which contract type of vehicles can be deployed is a bit thin, leaving little scope to recover very much of the standing costs.

When all is said and done, most con-

COSTS AND CONTRACT PRICES FOR A FIVE TO 10-COACH OPERATION

Costed per vehicle - with coach value of:	£10,000	£20,000	£40,000	£60,000
Standing costs				
VED, O-licence and test	£400	£400	£400	£400
Coach insurance	£750	£1000	£1200	£1300
Premises and associated costs	£1250	£1250	£1250	£1250
Admin wages/principal's drawings	£2500	£2500	£2500	£2500
Finance cost / interest on capital	£1000	£2000	£4000	£5000
Overheads	£1000	£1000	£1000	£1000
Engineering wage costs	£2000	£2000	£2000	£2000
Depreciation and replacement funding	£3000	£6000	£8000	£10000
Annual standing cost: before profit	£11900	£16150	£20350	£23450
Including 10 per cent profit	£13090	£17665	£22385	£25795
Plus wage costs (per day)				
Assume part-time driver, allowing all employment cost and 10 per cent profit, say:	£30	£30	£30	£30
Gives standing and wage cost per day (over 190 days per year) of:				
Recovering two thirds standing costs	£75.93	£92.33	£108.53	£120.49
Recovering 3/4 standing costs	£81.67	£99.73	£118.36	£131.82
Plus running costs (in pence per mile)				
Fuel and lubricants	21	21	21	21
Tyres	4	4	4	4
Spares, repairs and consumables	24	20	18	16
Running cost before profit	49	45	43	41
Running cost including 10 per cent profit	53.9	49.5	47.3	45.1
For 40 miles day (plus appropriate standing charge)	£21.56	£19.80	£18.92	£18.04
For 80 miles per day(Plus appropriate standing charge)	£43.12	£39.60	£37.84	£36.08

Consequently, a 40-mile per day contract using a £10,000 coach and seeking to recover two thirds of standing costs from the contract would need to be charged out at £97.49 (£75.93 + £21.56) per day. But, if the same contract is operated with a £60,000 coach, the rate would need to be £138.53 (£120.49 + £18.04)

Not only is there the original fitment cost of seatbelts, but the ongoing maintenance, too

tract vehicles are kept because of the contract — not for the other work that they may do. Therefore, at the very least, I believe that contract operation needs to recover two thirds of standing costs. I have put a line in the table calculated on this basis, for 190 days, to which daily wage costs have been added. I have, however, also illustrated the cost if three quarters of standing charges are to be recovered. If this is not considered appropriate in all circumstances, it must surely be apt when two or more contracts link together — thus making any infilling work even less likely.

I have only done these illustrative calculations on the basis of contracts being done using part-time drivers. The use of full timers might well increase the price needed to make a profit.The advent of seatbelts gives the industry the need and the opportunity to break out from the mould of unreasonably low prices for school contracts.

A few, seriously remunerative contracts are likely to yield more profit than operating a large number on slim margins.

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CBW

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1995 M DAF SB3000 WS Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 55R
1994 L EOS 90 49R, toilet
1994 L DAF WS3000 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF KS3000 Easishift Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Int Retarder, Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF HS2700 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L MB230LT Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF KS3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1933 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SM230LT Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R Toilet
1992 J DAF SB2305 Duple 340, 57R
1992 J DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R Toilet
1992 J DAF MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
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1995 M DAF DB250 Auto, Northern Counties Palatine II, 77 str double deck bus
1995 M DENNIS DART Auto, 10M, Plaxton Pointer, 40 str bus
1992 J DAF SB220 Auto, Ikarus Citibus, 48 str bus

1991 H DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R Toilet
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H'
1990 G DAF SB3000 Van Hool 'H', 49/Toilet
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 53R
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH' 51R/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51r/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500 , 52R
1989 F DAF MB 230LB Plaxton, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB2300 Duple 340SL, 53R
1988 E DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet
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1989 F DAF MB230 Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet
1989 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1989 SB3000 Plaxton 3500, 51/Toilet
1988 VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1988 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R Toilet
1988 E SB3000 Van Hool Alizee SH 49R/Toilet
1987 E DAF SB2300 Plaxton 3500, 53R, air conditioned
1987 D DAF 2300 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 49R/Toilet
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High life for Not Even Slightly Dirty Dozen

THE Not Even Slightly Dirty Dozen shown here are pictured shortly before their brave ascent of three major mountains, so presumably they changed into climbing gear later on.

They did, however, have the benefit of the luxury transport waiting behind them, supplied free by Tappins Coaches and CSE Aviation - no prizes for guessing who owns which. The Van Hool took the charity-supporting climbs up Ben Nevis, Scafell and Snowdon, and the helicopter was on hand to take them down, should their attempt fail.

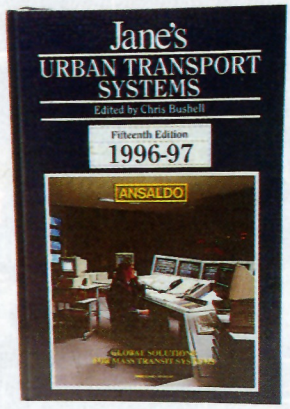
The photograph of coach/aircraft together seems a common ploy, which cynics would say is an attempt to imbue the coach with its multi-million-pound partner's attributes. In this case, however, there's a less subtle connection, since Paul Tappin is also a leisure helicopter pilot.

"It all started as a challenge to complete a team event in true British style," says Oxford student Ben Cluley. "Accordingly, the whole team obtained sponsors and raised over £1,000, to be donated to local hospice for the terminally ill, Sobell House."

Not cheap, but unique

JANE'S Urban Transport Systems has reached the fifteenth edition with the publication of the '96-'97 issue.

The vast, 700-page volume detailing more or less everything there is to know about coach, bus, tram and rail systems throughout the world, and the manufacturing industry, is an absolute 'must have' for anyone with an interest in the industry outside of the UK.



City by city, *Jane's* details the overall picture of public transport, giving invaluable names, address and phone numbers of companies and regulating authorities throughout the world.

It gives a rough picture of fleet sizes and types (notwithstanding slight changes that may have occurred since the daunting compilation) and predicts developments based on its network of correspondents.

The manufacturing section is comprehensive, to say the least, encompassing not only vehicle manufacturers but support industries including signalling and communications, track equipment, consultancies and a good index for these hard-to-find companies.

At £210, *Jane's Urban Transport Systems* is hardly a book to put on your Christmas list but for large, serious, ambitious or just plain interested operators from the coach, bus or rail industries it is absolutely unique and indispensable.

Copies are available direct from Jane's Information Group, Sentinel House, 163 Brighton Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2NH, tel 0181 700 3750.

Latest matching accessory

IF you're looking for that fleet accessory which has more than one use, take a tip from the operator of this Ikarus Z50, with a party of school children aboard.

Our correspondent has several guesses as to the receptacle's use; perhaps, he says, to contain human effluent... a case of using the facilities ONLY when the vehicle is stationary.

More likely is his suggestion that it's there to catch lubricant from a leaking gearbox and pour it back into the filler — an essential fixture in the news editor's British biking days, and a kind of total loss lubrication system without the loss.

Whatever you use your bucket for, make sure it matches the livery...

Men on the Clapped-out Omniboat

AND finally, the new fleet addition to Plymouth Citybus is this low-floor vehicle which, as you can see, can handle wet roads with ease, is economical and eco friendly (providing, of course, fuel used is not baked beans).

The company's attempt at winning the River Dart raft race was not, we are sorry to report successful. The 10-mile trip took them two hours and 45 minutes which left them about half way up the field, but the design is being refined for next year, they say. "There were times when we had to get out of the raft and carry it over weirs and such like, and there were points where there was so little water, it also had to be carried," said team leader Neal Borbon. However, the Car and Commercial Engineering team at PCB had got the design good enough that it COULD be carried.

Citybus md Brian Fisher was delighted, but denied he's branching out into the water taxi business: "But it shows that our engineers can turn their hands to virtually any task, and make a professional job of it," he says. Next time, lads, use the high-ratio diff and don't bother with a speed limiter, eh?? CBW

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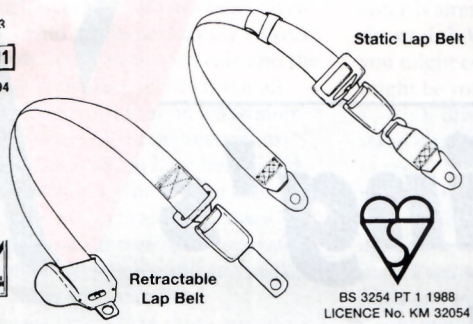

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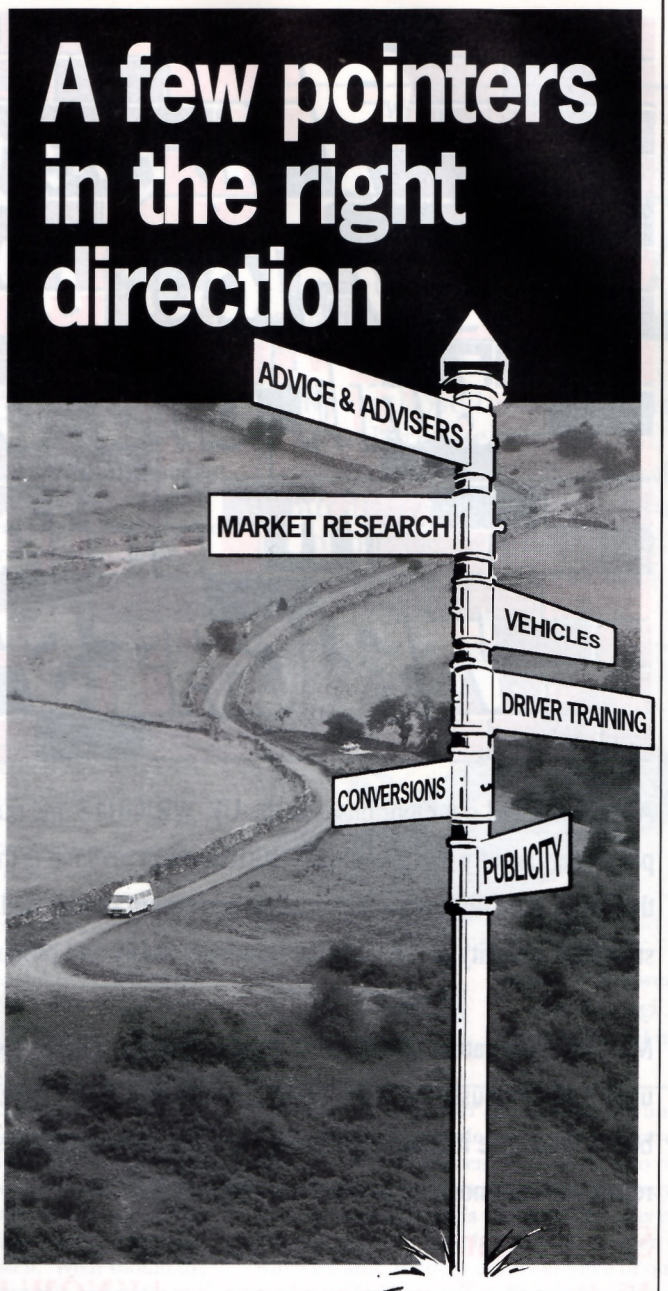
A few pointers in the right direction



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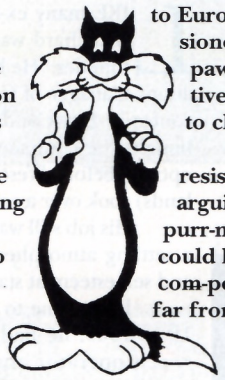
LETTER OF THE WEEK

Getting in a cat flap

From Fluffy the Cat



I welcome your efforts to expose attempts to avoid EU directives on workers' rights by employing cats (*CBW*, 12 October).

Unions report members are 'feline angry' about this ap-paw-ling development; employers are accused of "purr-paws-ly trying to avoid the requirements of the meow-stricht Treaty."

Wildcat strikes have not been ruled out.

A purr-tition is being sent to Euro-purr-an Com-mew-nity Commissioner Sir Leon Kitten, requesting a paws for thought in drafting new directives, and for a new claws in the Treaty to close this loophole.

The industry, however, is likely to resist fur-ther legislation, one source arguing that "current regulations are too purr-nickety, and fur-ther restrictions could have a cat-astrophic effect on our com-pet-itiveness.' It seems that this tail is far from over.

Fluffy the Cat
Lincoln

Seatbelt law an ass

From Raymond Maddock

The following is a letter I wrote to superintendant Hay of Cheshire Constabulary:
"I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 24 September and I note your comments regarding the law on seatbelts. It is most unfortunate that it has taken six months and 15 letters to finally get the answers to my questions.

It would appear, then, that pupils sitting three on a double seat on a coach fitted with seatbelts is, in fact, not against the law as I had supposed. If I interpret your answers correctly the only offence is that committed by the driver who allows on to his coach more passengers than he has seats for.

As a coach operator who has been carrying up to a thousand pupils per day for 28 years I found that, with the three-for-two rule and the normal eight per cent absenteeism it was all right to book up to 57 children on a 53-seater coach. I now contract out all the services to operators with coaches which have belts fitted and I now only book up to the seating capacity of the coach. The cost increase this causes has put me at a great disadvantage to the operators who use old double-deck buses and can put up to 100 on a 77 seater with standing.

I am now losing trade to these operators so that the law which was supposed to make travel safer for children has, as I predicted, backfired. We have all seen these old bangers with children hanging from the windows, doors and even the emergency exits. So much for the supposedly intelligent Steven Norris's contribution to road safety. He has now resigned and left others to pick up the pieces of his ill-thought-out legislation.

What about parents who carry children on their knees? Do they commit an offence? What about the county councils who issue bus passes and then contract coaches? What does a driver do if on contract to an education authority with a coach of 53 seats and more pupils turn up? Will the education authority be prosecuted? Suppose an operator who normally uses a bus without belts has a mechanical problem and sends a coach fitted with seatbelts. Will he be in breach of the law when he sent a supposedly safer vehicle because he is over capacity?

What will happen if a contractor breaks down and he asks another contractor to cover his 53 seater? The cover vehicle is only a 51 seater and he picks up 52 children. Who gets the blame? Does the driver refuse transport to one pupil and if so which one?

If a driver is on his way to a private school in the morning with a 53-seater coach fitted with belts and normally carries 53 children but for some inexplicable reason on this occasion he arrives at the last pick up to find three children and he has only two seats. He refuses the last pupil who has a valid bus pass for which she has paid. The child is only eight years old and her sister is already on the coach. What should the driver do? When answering this one perhaps you might consider that the eight-year-old girl might be your daughter.

If drivers at a school in the afternoon stand chatting while the pupils board, are they to count heads before moving off or must they remain with their coaches and count pupils as they board? This drivers will not do. From the driver's seat he cannot see if pupils are sharing a seat. Even supposing he does count heads and finds one too many what does he do? How would you feel if he ejects your child?

You will see by these examples that to put extra responsibility on the driver is unreasonable. His main concern is to drive the bus safely to its destination. In fact, it is more unreasonable than having three children share a double seat where seatbelts are fitted especially when, in my experience, the belts are NEVER worn on home-to-school transport.

Having given your due consideration to the points I raise and come to a decision regarding your answers perhaps you will agree with me that the new law "is an ass" and cannot be enforced. It is just another case of a government minister trying to win political support for his party by introducing what is seen to be popular legislation but, because it was not thought through and no proper consultation was undertaken, he has now made coach and bus travel less safe for our children. His answer is to resign and forget the problem, hope it will go away, or become someone else's problem. One day everyone will see I was right but that will happen only when a traffic accident occurs to some of our children. I will get no satisfaction from knowing I was right and Steven Norris was wrong."

Raymond Maddock
Mecca Transport
Macclesfield
Cheshire

Commercial judgement

From Raymond Taylor

It would be naive to assume Stagecoach did not consider the points raised by David Wayman (*CBW*, 21 September) concerning artics. As always, it is a matter of commercial judgment about horses for courses bearing in mind:
1) Stagecoach's past experience with double-deck coaches being frequently banned from the Forth Bridge during high winds would effectively rule out such vehicles for Fife operations:
2) Given that single-deck vehicles are necessary, the considerable luggage capacity required cannot be achieved with low-floor vehicles.

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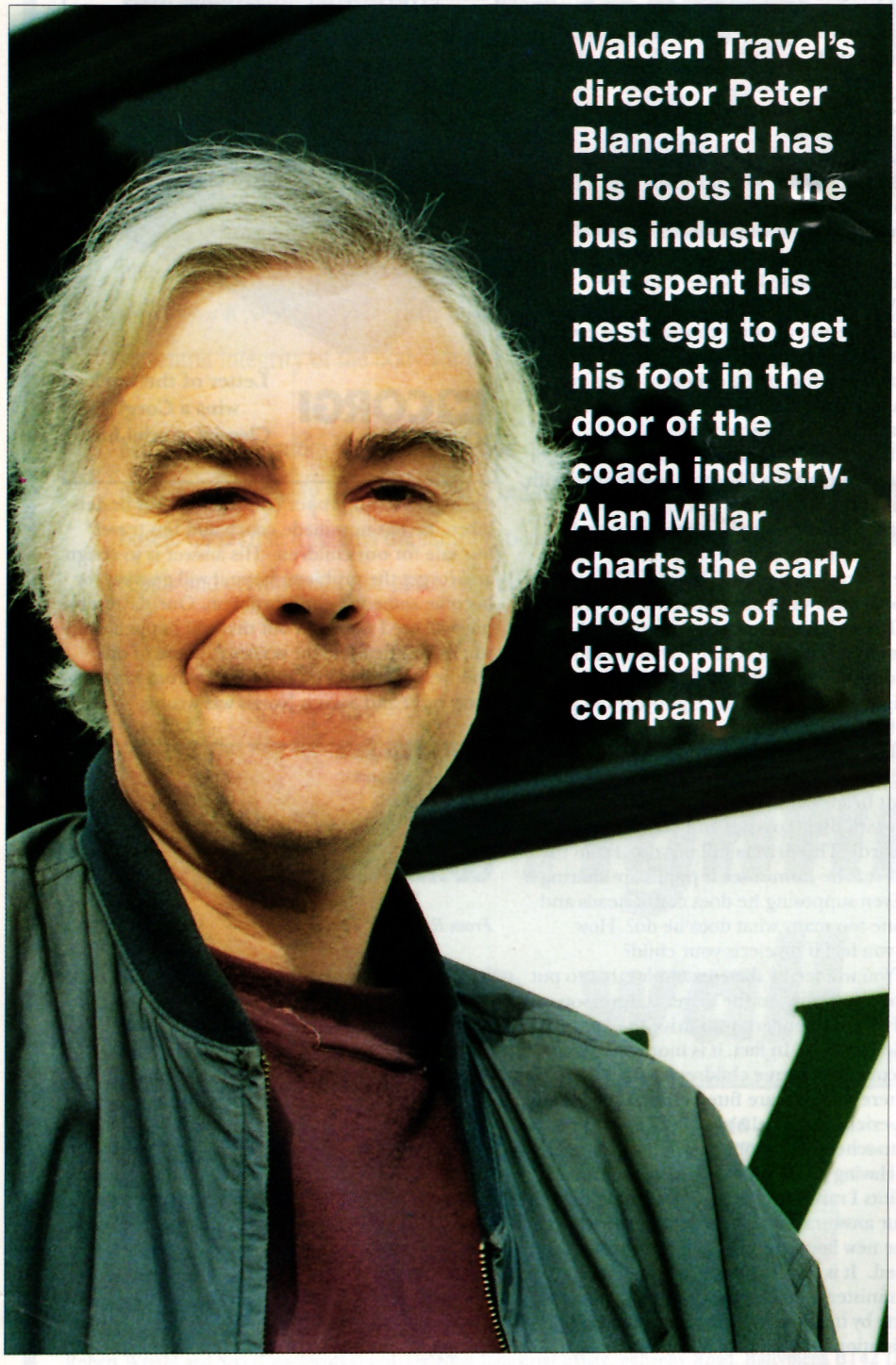
Keep those letters rolling in. If requested, we will publish them anonymously, but always include your full name (ie first name and surname), address and telephone number

CORGI CLASSICS

Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

He's a cautious optimist



Walden Travel's director Peter Blanchard has his roots in the bus industry but spent his nest egg to get his foot in the door of the coach industry. Alan Millar charts the early progress of the developing company

LIKE many ex-National Bus Company managers, Peter Blanchard was feeling decidedly insecure by the mid-nineties. He began to worry about his position as operations manager of County Bus, running old London Country routes in Essex and Hertfordshire, when British Bus nearly bought the company in August 1994, and was reviewing his options before West Midlands Travel (now Travel West Midlands) took over a couple of months later.

His job still wasn't being threatened, but this was hardly a settling atmosphere for anyone with a family, a mortgage and self-esteem at stake.

It was time to take advantage of his career path. Aged 18 in 1969, he had joined Grey-Green, London's biggest coach operator and one of the most successful training grounds in the business. He shared a house then with Len Wright, future chairman of Q Drive, and made valuable contacts with other colleagues.

His move into NBC took him to Kent where he met his wife Julie and he ended up at Maidstone & District, buying shares when it was sold to senior managers in November 1986. Eight years on, with murmurings that M&D was on the market – it went to British Bus in April 1995 – Mr Blanchard was starting to think of cashing in his investment.

Those thoughts were galvanised by the knowledge that his next-door neighbour but one, in Saffron Walden in Essex, wanted to sell his four-vehicle coach business. There were risks and uncertainties in setting up on his own, but were they any greater than life for a forty-something manager in an increasingly accountant-led bus industry?

More than that, he spotted an opportunity: "Saffron Walden is quite isolated, very much a no man's land. It had been part of Premier Travel's territory, but the town didn't have a strong coach operator. Most business went to operators in towns 15 miles away," he says.

So he seized his chance, negotiated an amicable departure from County Bus and was up and running from 1 August 1995 as Walden Travel, but with the lifeline of continuing consultancy work for County Bus.

He's also become a director of Viceroy Coaches, Saffron Walden's local bus operator, fulfilling a similar role to Peter and Julie Blanchard's two non-executive directors at Walden Travel. Both are colleagues from Grey-Green days. Company chairman John Wilson ran Sovereign Bus for Blazefield Holdings before his retirement about three years ago and David Grimmett runs three-vehicle Traveline in Minehead, Somerset. This was almost a new-start venture. The previous owner had a DAF SB and a Leyland Tiger with E registrations, an older Bedford and a J-registered Toyota Optimo. It was listed in *Yellow Pages*, but had no livery, displayed no names or phone numbers, held some Essex schools contracts and worked regularly for Bell College, an English language school in the town. There was only enough regular work for one-and-a-half coaches.

The business still carries Bell College students to and from airports, on evening excursions to London theatres, day and half-day trips to such traditional English tourist destinations as Cambridge, Canterbury and Stratford upon Avon and occasional weekend trips to Scotland. Very quickly, Mr Blanchard was canvassing for other work.

"One of the first things I did was circulate 32 Essex schools within a 10-mile radius of here," he says. "I'd decided that any spare pennies had to be used to fit retractable seatbelts. That, I guess, was our unique selling proposition. "We

went for retractables because even the smallest, weakest child can work them and, although other operators could command a price premium by fitting seatbelts, we considered them to be capital expenditure, depreciated over the life of the vehicle, so we provided them at no extra cost," he says.

"It struck me that there was probably a better market in primary schools than secondaries. Secondary schools tend to have coaches hired in by individual teachers and there's a problem getting hold of teachers. Primary schools use secretaries who are easier to contact and seem to speak to each other. A lot of work comes by their recommendation. And there's less vandalism with primary school children, who don't often carry Stanley knives in their pockets."

The bush telegraph of school secretaries helped bring in the first swimming contracts within a couple of months of starting up and he also took on a registered school service on behalf of County Bus when it outgrew the 30-seaters it was running. He says his policy of paying full-time drivers on a daily, rather than hourly rate means swimming contracts can be marginally costed.

"While all our prices are profitable, including swimming contracts, I tend to view swimming contracts as loss leaders to make us the first port of call for any private hires from those schools," he explains.

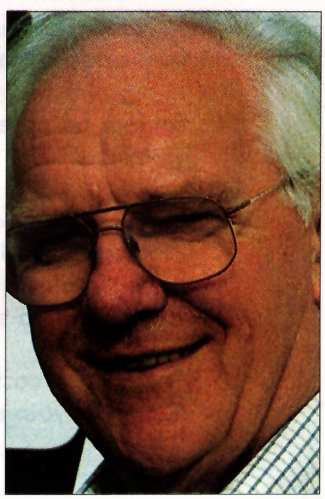
Non-educational private hires were slower in developing, but began picking up at the turn of the year after he had a second coach painted in a simple, yet effective white livery with green lettering in a Maidstone & District-influenced typeface. "One coach wasn't enough to get noticed. But one of our biggest customers happened to walk past Bell College when we were loading up one day. She is a leading light in OAP groups. And, in a fairly small town, it's also amazing how many other things school secretaries are involved with, like Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and sports teams."

Private hire bookings were also helped when Stagecoach halved its Premier Travel fleet earlier this year to concentrate mainly on scheduled express services.

As work built up, Mr Blanchard rapidly recognised the limitations of his fleet. The Optimo was too small: "It didn't have enough luggage space for airport movements when we can be meeting three flights at the same time. We need a 57-seater with decent luggage capacity to carry 25 students and the sort of luggage they bring. We also found the 21-seater was too small for village primary schools on a one child per seat basis." It was replaced by a second Duple-bodied 1988 DAF SB. "It made a certain amount of sense to have two similar coaches in the fleet and, having had no real experience of running DAFs anywhere, I'm impressed. Their big plus is that they have very good luggage capacity," he says. New business has since prompted the purchase of the first highliner, a Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger.

Private hires began picking up after a second coach was painted in a simple but effective livery

Maintenance is contracted to a plant hire company that also rents him his secure parking space but, as a former traffic man, he confesses to being surprised by some of the headaches of keeping even a small fleet running. "I think it's the cost as much as anything. And buying second-hand vehicles. Second-hand coach prices seem to be rising daily and we've spent an awful lot of time going a long way to look at rubbish at crazy prices. And even with the care and attention given to vehicles bought from dealers, we seem to get teething problems. It would be nice to be able to get a 12-month guarantee on used coaches like you can with a car."



Company chairman John Wilson ran Sovereign Bus for Blazefield Holdings before retiring about three years ago

His carefully worked out plans to avoid getting in hock to the bank had to be reviewed. After six months – "like everyone else does," he says – Walden Travel needed an overdraft facility and he has had to make limited use of hire purchase for a couple of coaches. The business is too young to be in profit yet, but big company training makes Peter Blanchard hot on management accounting. He reviews his private hire rates quarterly and knows how much income each coach needs to generate.

And he's cautiously optimistic. After little over a year, business is growing by word of mouth. "It's very much sink or swim, but it's more fun and relaxing than working for a big bus company." CBW

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Affordable solution?

The search is on for an affordable, fit-for-the-purpose coach. First buyers for Hughes DAF's Ikarus-bodied solution include London Coaches parent, the Pullmans Group. Mike Morgan put one of its 18 automatics through an exclusive *CBW* road test

When Hughes DAF took the plunge last October and opted to bring-in a low-cost coach to complement its existing range on premium DAF Bus SB3000 underframe, it had to measure the growing claims by operators that they needed a vehicle to fill the assumed vacuum left by the late-lamented dual purpose-type maid of all work.

The sales team headed by Bob McLeod and Jim Martin were determined to retain the benefits of a standardised chassis and that, by coming down in price, they didn't compromise on quality. They are confident that, having come through the traumas of the last three years, DAF Bus is confirming its position as a major player and the 11.6-litre-engined SB3000 has earned a reputation for hard work and long life.

CBW is no stranger to this high-powered SB, with road tests over the last four years confirming it to be a very able performer with high torque translating into a pleasurable and relaxed drive. Economy has consistently been among the best, with acceleration together with ride quality figuring high on the list of positive attributes.

But the collapse of United Bus and subsequent takeover of DAF Bus by the VDL group combined to undermine its full potential. Market perceptions of a manufacturer in trouble had shaken confidence.

But DAF Bus is still here. It has not only survived but is getting stronger, with new products on the stocks to widen its appeal as a supplier of heavy-duty coaches and buses. Two recent, unrelated moves may mark the turning point in the company's fortunes - particularly in the UK. American truck giant PACCAR has taken over DAF Trucks, bringing long-term stability to DAF Bus' supplier of engines, while Cowie, the parent of dealer Hughes DAF, has emerged as this country's second largest bus operator.

On the other hand, Ikarus, the Hungarian bodybuilder with a factory in Budapest, has had a chequered career in the UK despite the high volume it produces for its home market.

▶▶▶

EXCLUSIVE FIRST TEST

First imports of its Blue Danube body on Volvo B10M were a worthy attempt to match up to western European quality standards and the Hughes DAF-imported City Bus on SB220 chassis has a loyal following.

But with its eastern European roots and low-price tags there are suspicions that "you get what you pay for."

Pullmans, the London Coaches parent, was among the first operators tempted by the Hughes DAF blend of tried-and-tested underframe and affordable, but potentially fit-for-the-purpose Ikarus low-height body.

The prototype shown at the 1995 Coach & Bus show displayed significant shortcomings. With an entrance area that was too short and rear floor arrangement over the engine leaving a lot to be desired, visitors could, nevertheless, look beyond the show vehicle and spot a potential.

That potential is first guided by price and secondly cautioned by quality. Pullmans had already experience of the Ikarus City Buses on its London Transport tendered service to Heathrow and concluded that, if the bus was fit for its purpose, so should the coach be.

First offering was the low-height 350 (which, oddly, is 3.25 metres high), and a 3.55-metre high 396 version is now available.

Pullmans wanted to upgrade to a fully-air-conditioned fleet on its Kent commuter services run out of Northfleet and had standardised on Van Hool-bodied DAF Bus SB3000s. But the Ikarus 350 came with a tantalising £125,000 price tag.

Adding Sutrak air-conditioning and Pullmans' preferred automatic transmission brought the total price to a highly competitive £143,500. Being less than the basic price of an alternative, the bait was set.

It was sufficient for Pullmans to bite. But it did not simply take one as a taster. It has ordered 18, transforming the 50-vehicle North Kent Express-branded service overnight.

North Kent Express runs from 5am till 1am the next morning, providing an hourly service on three routes into London which is boosted to every 10 minutes at peak when the 44-coach peak vehicle requirement clocks up 40,000 kilometres per week.

Passenger loyalty is encouraged by keeping one driver to one coach and one coach to one roster. Season tickets costing £1,275 per annum account for 50 per cent of revenue.

It's a price-sensitive and very demanding marketplace. Competition is intense and Pullman's Kent team is building a reputation based on quality and reliability. Hence the requirement for new coaches and the switch to air-conditioning.

If the Ikarus is not fit for the purpose, this intensive service will soon expose the weaknesses and, after four months' experience, general manager/director Alex Jones is well satisfied. The company is still buying Van Hool bodies for tour work and Mr Jones admits that, with the exception of the air-con, the Ikarus is a no-frills cheaper vehicle, although, "for the commuter service, they're fine."

To establish how well the Ikarus matches up to the claim *CBW* put one of Pullmans' P-reg coaches with 15,500 km on the clock to the test.

Rounded front profile is stylish and practical

Build

Ikarus has a distinctive rounded style. Curved lower panels give it a fat-bellied look emphasised by the side windows. It's a style that has been around long enough to be familiar despite being relatively rare.

The window line is high, windscreen less deep than new-generation designs, and the overall profile shows few signs of a concerted effort to smooth out the air flow. Nevertheless, it carries its maturity well, displaying admirable character - particularly around the front quarters where there's also practicality in the shape of a hinged panel for access to the wipers .

Semi-integral construction is the order of the day, with the DAF Bus transit beams removed and the two underframe modules mated to a jig-built welded-steel frame which meets EC R66 rollover regulations.

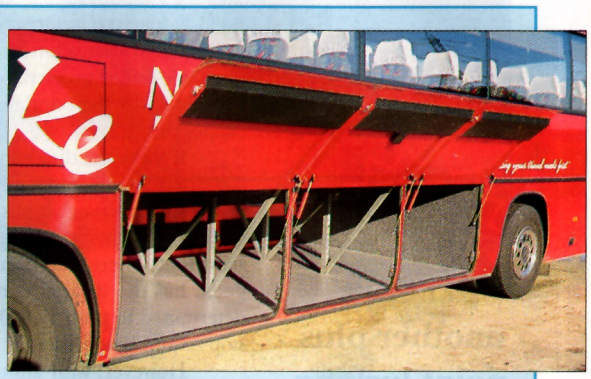
Extensive anti-corrosion treatment includes wax oil injected into box sections and other vulnerable areas.

The main side panels are one-piece galvanised stretched steel bonded and mechanically fixed to the frame. Lower panels and locker doors are aluminium. The front and side panels are glass-fibre-reinforced polyester while the roof is a single-piece Pekolit sheet bonded to the frame.

Indeed, bonding is a theme throughout the structure, including the bronze-tinted double-glazed side windows and front windscreen with anti-sun green top tint.

Interior trim makes extensive use of moquette - 'graffiti' in the case of Pullmans. Every available surface - roof, parcel rack and side walls - are in plain grey while the seat moquette is replicated on centre roof panel and the strip between the vents in the racks. Blinds are fitted to the side windows in preference to curtains.

Although the racks are deep enough to hold the *CBW* road tester's briefcase, the height available shrinks to 10 cm over the three rearmost rows of seats. This improves headroom



Semi integral build produces large locker

The access for driver couldn't be easier

Modified wide doorway is impressive

around the emergency door and for the raised platform over the rear-mounted engine. Flooring is multi-layer glass fibre with grey speckled Tarabus covering.

Although PVC foam noise insulation is fitted on the underside of the floor and Ikarus claims extensive use of other materials around wheelarches, side walls, roof , rear walls and underframe, the *CBW* decibel recorder detected relatively high levels of engine noise though, to be fair, road noise and wind noise were effectively muffled.

Passenger Impressions

Space for passengers is one of the Ikarus' virtues. Wide 90 cm entrance achieved by adopting shorter than average 5.86-metre wheelbase and shallow front dash makes the in-swing door and entrance very inviting and highly suitable for interurban-type use.

There's a well-positioned courier seat that does not intrude significantly and the first three steps are sensibly of equal height. A platform before the final 16 cm step into cab or central gangway is big enough to be accommodating for passengers adjusting their position after paying the driver.

Hungarian-built IMAG reclining seats are slim, firm but well shaped, comfortable and fitted with retractable lap belts. However, they lack the deep comfort associated with a touring coach - though they are equipped with fold-up armrests, magazine racks and robust footrests which, unfortunately, hinge up to shin height when not required.

Radiator-type heating with thermostatically-controlled circulating pump keep the passengers warm while Sutrak air-conditioning keeps tempers cool in rush-hour traffic.

Six fluorescent flush-fitting lights mounted in the centre roof provide the main saloon lighting, night lights are fitted in the parcel rack and individual lamps are fitted above each seat in service units which incorporate speakers with individual volume control for every other seat.

Blaupunkt supplies the radio/cassette/PA with the driver's mic fixed on the panel above the signalling window and a courier's mic retracts into a special hole in the centre of the dash.

Driving impressions

The space theme and the adequate, rather than elaborate, spec continues into the driver's cockpit.

In the absence of a gearstick, access to the comfort of Isringhausen 6500 air-sprung driver's seat couldn't be easier.

DAF's excellent modern dash displayed clearly before your pilot puts all the necessary dials into a logical position when viewed through the fully-adjustable steering wheel.

Throughout the test, the controls and all dials proved to be very user friendly and commensurate with all the benefits of

press D-for-drive concept of commuter service operation. Automatic transmission in association with the light, responsive cable-linked accelerator makes life so much easier that it questions why the standard eight-speed manual box has any supporters.

If there are disadvantages they are difficult to see from the driver's seat - especially given the added benefit of integral retarder, though it has to be said that braking beyond the delicate retarder effect requires a very firm push with the right foot. There's no doubt that the pressure on the brake pedal has the desired consequence but, with 330 bhp still determined to push 12,820 kg of coach forward, a controlled stop requires judgement.

However, with almost 1,000 Lbf ft of torque lurking under the other pedal, this coach is all about moving forward. No matter how far down you press the accelerator the engine response is smooth and progressive. Acceleration figures are impressive yet progress through the gears was almost imperceptible. Up-shifts on the test coach were impeccable with the rev counter needle pushed up to the limit of the yellow band at 2,000 rpm under hard acceleration or gently hovering in the 1,100-1,700 rpm green range during gentle touring.

The driver's seat offered a commanding view forward thanks to sensible height of the dash. However, one serious blindspot is created by the combination of thick windscreen pillar and offside mirror. Wiper sweep is designed for left-hand drive, clearing the nearside mirror manfully but neglecting a wide section of the right-hand side of the screen - coincidentally, an area unprotected by the sun blind, which is so high it is impossible to reach when fully retracted. Other than overhead lockers there's no other storage for drivers' odds and ends.

There's another plus point lurking in the wings. The auto gearbox adds £8,500 to the price. It consumes around 1 mpg extra fuel. But it cuts maintenance in half

Performance

Pullmans has yet to find the optimum setting on the automatic gearbox. Fuel consumption during daily commuting is around 7 mpg and Alex Jones is convinced that it could be improved. Experimentation of different chips and detailed fuel monitoring are to follow.

However, this *CBW* test recorded a more acceptable 10 mpg, showing what can be achieved on more conventional coach work during an equal mix of motorway, A roads and town-centre work. This compares with 11 mpg on a manual gearboxed SB3000 (*Coachmart*, 30 January 1992).

Being more than four years apart, another difference between these two tests was the change to tighter emissions controls. Power may have dropped from 354 bhp and torque from 1,032 Lbf ft but the new Euro 2 engine peaks at lower revs, making its performance more responsive yet slightly slower - ideal for an automatic.

There's another plus point lurking in the wings. The auto gearbox adds £8,500 to the price. It consumes around 1 mpg extra fuel. But it cuts maintenance in half.

Having lived with automatics and manuals on the same type of work Pullmans' experience makes a compelling argument for the extra investment. Taking the records for four K-reg Van Hool-bodied DAF SB3000s at random from the workshop, the company reports the following pence-per-mile costs averaged out over 12 months: coach A (manual) - 8.29p; coach B (manual) - 6.67p; coach C (auto) - 3.63p; coach D (auto) - 3.21p. Assuming 60,000 km per annum and average maintenance costs a coach with manual transmission absorbs £4,224 while an automatic is just £2,112.

Verdict

Over the five-year fleet life that Pullmans expects from its Ikarus/DAFs, the automatic box will have more than paid for itself. However, the unknown factor is whether the capital saving on the body will have been justified.

It is early days and residuals at this stage are pure speculation. However, so much depends upon how many of this type of coach Hughes DAF can sell.

Given the combination of factors, including the rising reputation of DAF Bus and potential group orders from Cowie, there are some very positive indicators which should give operators confidence to buy.

This is a coach which makes no pretence about its market aspirations. It is unashamedly targeted at the lower end of the market, offering a basic coach at a basic price. Our test and the Pullmans experience suggests that the body is more than fit for this purpose and makes affordable a level of chassis refinement more frequently associated with coaches at the other end of the price range. CBW

SPECIFICATION

Chassis:	DAF Bus SB3000
Body:	Ikarus 350 - 53 seats
Price:	from £125,000 - as tested £143,500
Engine:	rear-mounted Euro 2 DAF W242 six-cylinder, turbo-charged and intercooled
Power:	330 bhp (242 kW) @ 2,000 rpm
Capacity:	11.6 litre
Torque:	735 Lbf ft (996 Nm) @ 1,250 rpm
Gearbox:	ZF HP600 five-speed automatic with EST18 and integral retarder
Steering:	ZF hydraulic power assisted, column adjustable for height and rake
Brakes:	dual-circuit air over hydraulic system front - discs rear - drums handbrake - spring release
Suspension:	full air system with 8 cm raise and front kneel - double-acting telescopic shock absorbers and stabilisers on both axles
Front Axle:	axle -7,500 kg capacity
Rear axle:	DAF 1346 - 12,000 kg capacity

Euro 2 engine peaks at lower revs - ideal for auto

Tyres:	Michelin 315/80R 22.5
Air conditioning:	Sutrak

DIMENSIONS

Length:	12 metres
Width:	2.5 metres
Height:	3.25 metres
Wheelbase:	5.86 metres
Unladen weight:	12,820 kg
GVW:	17,000 kg
Underfloor locker space:	8.5 cubic metres

PERFORMANCE

Test consumption:	10.1 mpg
Consumption on North Kent Express commuter service:	7.34 mpg
Acceleration:	0-30 mph - 10 secs 0-50 mph - 23 secs
Fuel tank capacity:	95 gallons (maximum range - 959 miles)
Noise levels at 62.5 mph:	front - 72 dB(A) middle - 68 dB(A) middle with air-con working - 70 dB(A) rear - 73 dB(A)

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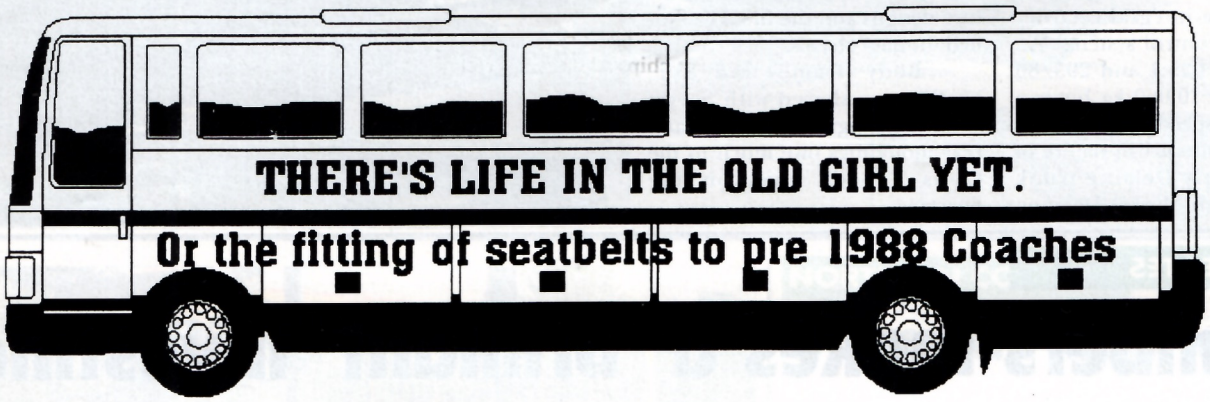

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Emphasis on seating capacity for interurban work

by Mike Morgan

TWO 62-seat service buses joining the 26-vehicle fleet of the Delaine Bus Company, Bourne, combine East Lancs' latest coachbuilding technology with the South Lincolnshire operator's traditional needs.

Built on 11-metre B10M Citybus chassis and registered P1 OTL and P2 OTL, the latest pair of buses are the company's first Volvo single-deck purchases and follow three Olympians - also bodied by East Lancs - which have joined the fleet since the start of 1995.

They are powered by Euro 2 Volvo DH10A 245 bhp engine coupled to ZF 4HP500 gearbox with two-stage integral retarder and EST 18 control system. An axle ratio of 4.25:1 and 295/80 tyres give the 10,060 kg buses a 55.6 mph top speed, making them ideal for the interurban nature of the half-hourly Delaine trunk service through Market Deeping to Peterborough. Body specification is described as "bespoke" by Delaine chairman, Ian Delaine-Smith, who runs the business with his three brothers, Kevin, Anthony and Mark.

Bucking the low-floor trends, Delaine has put the emphasis on seating capacity. A three step entrance is followed by a single step into the saloon which has a completely flat floor and three-plus-two bus-type seating in the rear half. Mr Delaine-Smith said he wanted as many passengers as possible seated because most were on the bus for over half an hour. Luggage racks and rear boot are fitted.

While the interior layout, wood-effect side casings, and traditional red moquette, match that of the company's Duple-bodied Leyland Tigers put into service since 1982, the body is among the first of East Lancs' new-generation Alusuisse-structure designs and the first Flyte for high-framed chassis.

Body frame and side profiles are shared with Spryte low-floor designs, while front and rear mouldings owe much to the Opus 2 body built on the Spartan.

YEATES

Chambers makes a 'brilliant' investment

NORTHERN Ireland operator Chambers Coach Hire is running this Jonckheere Mistral 50 on its own tour programme and corporate work.

The Volvo B10M SE-based coach has high specification, including toilet, drinks machine, Continental door and video. A 51-seater, it has become the Moneymore operator's flagship... but will be followed by more, says md Des Chambers.

"We think this vehicle is brilliant, and sets the style for new acquisitions from now on.

"The full-sized tour fleet is now all Volvo/Jonckheere," he said.

EAST LANCS

Scanias will oust Nationals

NORTH Western Road Car has bought six Alusuisse-framed, East Lancashire Flyte single-deckers.

Based on Scania L113, the buses will be based at Skelmersdale and used on the Wigan interurban service 395. Like most fleet additions at Skelmersdale, the new buses will oust Nationals.

"Last May we took 29 Scanias with Wrights Axcess-ultralow bodywork for our Wigan-Chorley routes," said operations manager Derek Draper. "More new buses will be arriving in the New Year, which will probably see the demise of further Nationals."

● **Delaine of Bourne gets first Flytes - see lead story**

NORTHERN COUNTIES

Olympian £5m order

THE first new double-deck buses for Stagecoach East London since its privatisation in 1994 are 43 Northern Counties Palatine Olympians.

The first of an order totalling £5 million have now joined the 600-strong fleet, replacing older deckers and are single-door 80-seaters. Once that order for 26 vehicles is delivered, the remaining 17 two-door buses for operation in central London will begin to arrive.

"We ordered the new vehicles after a recent round of LT tendering," said operations director Barry Arnold. They were costed on the basis of running new vehicles rather than buses from our existing fleet."

CBW

'The one-stop way to get a better image'

Fleet Finish's Forfar facility one of biggest and most modern paintshops in Scotland says Mark Williams

New facility boasts a massive 12,500 square feet of floor space

ONE of the biggest and most modern paintshops in Scotland is up and running after an eight-year story of expansion.

Fleet Finish's new facility in Forfar boasts a massive 12,500 square feet of floor space and three full-sized low-bake paint booths which can tackle almost any paint finish on up to 36 vehicles a week. Yet it has humble beginnings and was, until a month ago, in a 3,500 square feet unit.

Founder of the firm Ian McIntosh began his career in the industry 20 years ago but his big break came eight years ago when he was offered a commercial vehicle workshop by a former colleague.

"I decided to jump in and have a go," said Mr McIntosh. "It has proven a good move, leading to us moving into these purpose-built premises."

The paint booths promote a particular sense of pride, since the entire specification — which meets 1998 environmental approval — was the result of Mr McIntosh's liaison with a European booth manufacturer. In 18-metre, 16-metre and 14-metre lengths, they can accommodate the biggest double-decks with ease, and be used for all modern finishes, with the emphasis on two-pack.

Founder: md Ian McIntosh

Backing this up is an in-house vinyl-cutting service for lettering, a design service, and experience of techniques such as graduated tinting.

The package adds up to a complete, one-stop way to improve company image, says Mr McIntosh.

"I'm still shocked at the number of companies who repaint by brush. It's time-consuming, and the result is hardly a promotion of operators' fleets," he says. "But I certainly wouldn't say we have a cheap alternative. I like to deal with companies that can afford good quality, but the result is that 98 per cent of our customers come back. The other two per cent are either out of business or haven't paid their bill!"

Among satisfied customers are Mairs of Aberdeen and several FirstBus companies, who can enjoy some of the economies of scale, and travel hundreds of miles to reach Fleet Finish.

Typical price for a one-off, single-colour, two-pack respray of a full-sized coach is between £1,200 and £1,300, with work completed within a target of five days.

"At the moment, we have 12 staff, most working the equivalent of a 60-hour week.

"As we move further towards our capacity from the current 12 resprays a week to more than 30, we will staff up accordingly," says Mr McIntosh.

In the front line for operators is Ian McIntosh himself, backed up by his PA Anne Webster, whose role he says is key to the smooth running of the business.

"I am not very trusting of sales staff," said Mr McIntosh. "I prefer the direct, personal approach. Sales people can learn a great deal with small companies, then use it against you when they get a job elsewhere. I prefer to be the first in line."

The same bedrock exists in the paint shop, where workshop foreman Steven Orrock has worked since the company's inception back in 1988.

Details of all Fleet Finish's facilities can be obtained direct from Ian on 01307 468616, or from Fleet Finish, Carseview Road, Suttie Side Industrial Estate, Forfar DD8 3BT. The unit is just off the Aberdeen bypass.

HFC hydraulic filter crushers

Crush your disposal costs

OIL filter crushers have been installed in Cowie Group to help meet new waste legislation and scavenge saleable waste oil.

Ranger Hydraulics says the result, even at full list price of £2,100 including all accessories, could be savings all round. Since the new Special Waste Regulations in force since September insist on all oil waste to be taken away in UN-approved containers, the reduction in bulk means a reduction in disposal charges — in a standard 205-litre UN drum, you can squeeze 200 un-crushed filters, while 500 crushed filters will fit into a much smaller, 115-litre drum.

Collection of a standard drum is likely to cost between £40 and £55," says Ranger's md Bryan Lupton.

"Crushed filters are, of course, much more dense so it is becoming standard practice to collect them in the more easily-handled 115-litre container, for £25 to £35."

The commercial hydraulic crusher, HFC300, can handle coach and bus filters, running off 100 lb/square inch compressed air to produce 25 tons of compression, effectively removing 95 per cent of residual oil to drain into a special drum, and reducing the bulk of the canister by 80 per cent.

Ranger Hydraulic filter crushers are available from Bryan Lupton, tel 01684 772561, fax 01684 773480.

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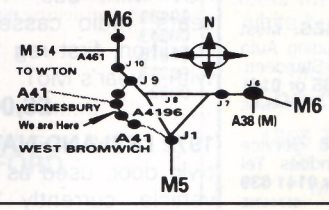

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Power door, just out of test, excellent engine, good condition throughout, to clear

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1990 (G) Iveco 49.10 23/25 seat buses, Reeve Burgess Beaver bodies, 5-speed manual gearboxes, power steering, power doors, beige interiors, new MoT's, £7,995 or with retrimmed coach seats/3-point belts from £9,995. Limited choice.

1989/90 (G) Iveco 42.10 23/5 seat buses, Phoenix or Robin Hood bodywork, 5-speed manual gearboxes, power steering, power doors, beige interiors, new or long MoT's, choice from £7,495.

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1987 (D) Mercedes 307D 12-seat coach, Reeve Burgess high roof conversion, luggage racks, brown interior, radio cassette, resprayed white, new MoT, £4,995

1986/7 (D/E) Iveco 49.10 19 and 21 seat buses, Robin Hood bodywork, beige/orange interiors, manual or automatic gearboxes, new MoT's, a selection available from just £3,995

1987 (D) Dodge S56 East Lancs 29-seat bus, power door, power steering, brown moquette, new MoT, one only at just £5,995

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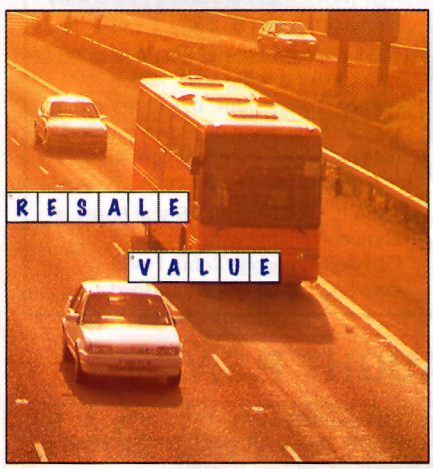

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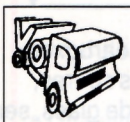

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632	Cricklewood - Grahame Park

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If you are interested and have already submitted your pre-qualification documents then you need take no further action at this stage.
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Pre-qualification documents are available by writing to:

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Heather McCarthy, Senior Personnel Assistant, MTL London Northern Ltd, 3rd floor, Hill House, 17-19 Highgate Hill, London, N19 5NA, or telephone 0171-561 6900 extension 208.

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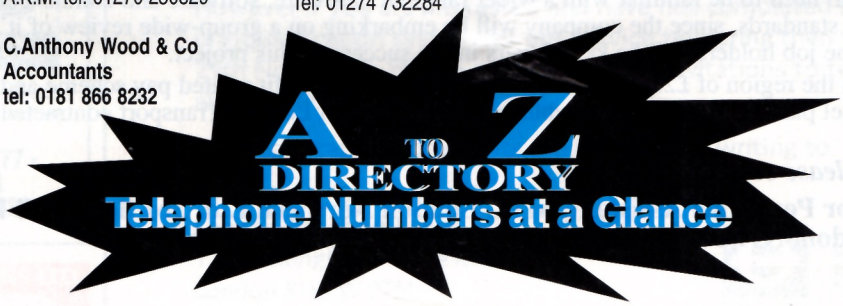

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▼ Coach and Bus

Changes at Autoglass

AUTOGLASS has appointed a customer service expert and strengthened its middle-management team.

Former Marks & Spencer branch manager Ian Carlisle is now director in charge of a review of Autoglass's UK operations: "Ian will prove to be a great addition to our management team," said md Gary Lubner.

And new fleet business manager Mark Sanchez will be working under recently-appointed Paul Evans, having been promoted from within.

▼ Bus

Pettitt joins consultancy

'Background will extend capabilities'

by Mark Williams

TOP transport consultancy Sian Thornthwaite Consultants has been joined by Tony Pettitt — a former technical director of consultancy Babtie.

"Tony's background in local authority passenger transport planning and operations will extend STC's capabilities in the growing area of public-sector transport consultancy," said Sian Thornthwaite.

Mr Pettitt led Berkshire's passenger transport team from 1991, initially in house, and later as part of an external consultancy provided by Babtie.

▼ Coach and Bus

Dodd area sales manager

John Dodd: area sales

UNIFORMS Unlimited has appointed John Dodd its area sales manager for the Midlands.

The London-based company, which specialises in the transport industry, says it's growing and Cheshire-based Mr Dodd will help its market penetration. He has worked 12 years for corporate clothing suppliers PUC.

▼ Bus

Eastern National's engineering chief

CHELMSFORD-based Eastern National's new engineering manager is Tony Mason, who has worked his way up from his first post as electrician.

Mr Mason, 38, will be a familiar face to the staff, having previously held down the post of depot engineer at Chelmsford.

▼ Light Rail

Manager of Metro

TRAVEL West Midlands has appointed Geoff Lusher general manager of its light-rail line Midland Metro. The transit system will link Wolverhampton with Birmingham Snow Hill: "This is an exciting opportunity to create a public transport system which will do much to encourage people currently travelling by car to use public transport," said Mr Lusher, who has worked for NBC and West Midlands PTE. "I see my great challenge as providing a Metro system that will integrate with the current, comprehensive bus and train network."

CBW Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly

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1. What is your primary job title? (Tick one only)

Owner/Director ❒01
Senior/General Manager ❒02
Engineering/Service Manager ❒03
Other (please specify) ❒04

2. What is your company's main business function?

Bus Operator ❒01
Coach Operator ❒05
Coach & Bus Operator ❒02
Local Government ❒03
Other (please specify) ❒04

3. How many vehicles does your company own/operate? (Tick all that apply)

	Buses	Coaches
1-5	❒01	❒10
6-10	❒02	❒11
11-15	❒03	❒12
16-25	❒04	❒13
26-39	❒05	❒14
40-100	❒06	❒15
101-400	❒07	❒16
401-1000	❒08	❒17
1000+	❒09	❒18

4. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation/ purchase and/or specification of the following? (Tick all that apply)

	Pur	Spec	Rec
Vehicles	❒01	❒12	❒23
Parts/Spares	❒02	❒13	❒24
Oil/Fuel	❒03	❒14	❒25
Breakdown	❒04	❒15	❒26
Insurance/Finance	❒05	❒16	❒27
Fuel Cards	❒06	❒17	❒28
Training	❒07	❒18	❒29
Venue/Attraction Tickets	❒08	❒19	❒30
Ferry Crossing	❒09	❒20	❒31
Hotel Bookings	❒10	❒21	❒32
Theatre Tickets	❒11	❒22	❒33
Other (please specify)			❒34

5. What type of work does your company undertake? (Tick all that apply)

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Day Excursions ❒02
British Tours ❒03
European Tours ❒04
Local Government Contracts ❒05
Emergency/Breakdown Services ❒06

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